

A ~~SCRIPTURE~~ DIRECTORY.

From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.

SCRIPTURE DIRECTORY

OR,

AN ATTEMPT TO ASSIST THE UNLEARNED READER

TO

UNDERSTAND THE GENERAL HISTORY

AND LEADING SUBJECTS

OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

BY THOMAS JONES,

RECTOR OF CREATON.

SEVENTH EDITION.

LONDON :

**PRINTED FOR L. B. SEELEY AND SONS :
BALDWIN AND CRADOCK : J. NISBET :
AND SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL.**

MDCCCXXIX.

**L. B. SEELEY AND SONS,
WESTON GREEN, THAMES DITTON
SURREY.**

INTRODUCTION.

EVERY young student of the Scripture would do well to consider the following particulars.

1. That the Bible is no human composition ; but the book of God, wherein he reveals his mind to man on the earth, to the end that man may know God in Christ, and through his knowledge obtain salvation.

This sacred book is a mirror to show us the *Saviour*, who is the sum and substance of the whole Scripture. In this glass is discovered to us, the glory of the person of Christ, as God manifested in the flesh ; the unsearchable riches of his grace, and the affairs of his kingdom. We are here informed of the glorious office which he sustains as Mediator between God and man, and assured that he is every way perfectly qualified for his great undertaking, having all power in heaven and earth, and possessing all fulness in himself. He is set forth as God the Saviour, and head over all things to

his church ; as the foundation and top stone of the building of God ; as the fountain of truth and grace ; the new and living way ; the resurrection, and the life. He is manifested to us as standing in all endearing relations to his people ; viz. their elder brother, husband, friend ; their head, their life, and inheritance for ever. We have here set before us what he has done and suffered, purchased and prepared for his children, and the glory to which he will conduct them in the end.

These things are taught us in *diverse ways* :—by types, and shadows ; by prophecies and promises ; by doctrines and miracles ; by the life and death of Christ. Let us therefore understand that the Bible is a mirror to show us the Saviour, whom to know is life eternal.

It is also a glass for man to see *himself* in. We are here most accurately described in all states, circumstances, and conditions that we pass through whilst on the earth. We may here learn what is our real character, whether we are the servants of God or the servants of sin ; whether we have passed from death to life, or remain under condemnation ; and whether we make progress in grace, or sink deeper in guilt. As a man by looking in a glass may view and examine every feature of his own face, so may we by looking in the Scriptures, view the tempers and dispositions of our own hearts, and know what manner of men we are, and what we have to expect at God's hands.

This blessed book is every way of *inestimable benefit* to the sincere soul that follows its directions. It guides unto all truth, guards against every error, points to every duty, and leads to every privilege. Believers are supplied here when all other sources fail them. We are directed where to find support in trouble, safety in the midst of danger, light in darkness, and life in death. The word of God answers all gracious purposes : it feeds, quickens, and strengthens ; it enlightens, purifies, and comforts the soul ; it is a full and never-failing fountain of consolation, peace, and joy to real believers.

The book of God is a most *wonderful book*, whether we consider the variety of subjects it embraces ; the glorious things it brings to view ; the grace it reveals, or the benefits it confers upon man. In this book is set before us the character of God, the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom, the real state of the church and of the world. It describes not only what exist in the present world, but reveals a world to come. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." It is a book full of eternal truth and love. It is God's mind ; it is man's instructor.

2. The Scriptures must be *searched and believed*, or no benefit can be derived from them. For instance, how can we know the evil of sin, the guilt and danger of the sinner, till we learn by the Scriptures that the wages of sin is death ? Who will ever desire

Christ, and flee to him for salvation, till they learn here their need of him, and that he saveth sinners ? Is it possible to receive Scripture principles, believe its promises, obey its precepts, follow its directions, or enjoy its comforts, till we first understand these things ? And how can they be understood till we search the oracles of God.

Would you possess that wisdom which cometh from above ? Then be a *diligent student* of the word of God . “ Lay up his words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, and speak of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deut. xi. 18, 19. Shall God declare his mind and will, and reveal his grace and salvation in the Scriptures ? and shall we remain willingly ignorant of such great things ? Shall God send us a book from heaven, setting forth the way of life eternal in his Son ? and shall we neglect this book and perish, when by studying it aright we might be brought to Christ, to holiness and heaven ? O **then** search the Scriptures, meditate in the law of the Lord both day and night, and “ let the word of God dwell in you richly.”

3. Let the Scriptures be studied in this *manner*. First, lift up your soul to God, and pray for his divine teaching ; that holy unction which shall teach you all things.

Say, "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." "Shine into my heart, to give me the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Let the Comforter guide me into all truth, and teach me to profit. None but the Spirit which indited the Scriptures can teach us to understand them profitably: "we cannot say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." The Scriptures are deep, and our capacities shallow: we must have divine faith to draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Come to the study of the Scriptures in a *spiritual frame of heart*. Aim sincerely at this: for more depends on the temper of the mind than on the strength of the understanding, towards learning God's will. It is not to the learned but to the meek will he teach his way. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." "With the lowly is wisdom." Come then like little children to learn of God, and he will show to you what he hides from the wise and prudent. And whatever progress you have made in Scripture knowledge, let a deep sense of your remaining ignorance abide with you: for ye know nothing yet as ye ought to know.

Read your Bible in a *methodical manner*. Whatever book in it you take in hand, go regularly through it from beginning to end. This will greatly assist you to understand what you read, and to remember it afterwards.

Before you begin any book, first learn when it was written, and on what occasion. If it be historical, inquire what length of time it comprises, and be careful to get a correct view of the general scope and leading subjects of the book which you are going to study. This method will assist you both to understand the history clearly, and to enter into the spirit of the doctrines it contains. The following pages are written with a view to aid your efforts in these matters. May God make them useful to you.

The writer under a conviction that something upon this plan might be useful to young readers, hath showed his good will to them, and wishes that his production was more worthy of their perusal.—And he here, once for all, acknowledges that he has frequently borrowed sentiments, and at times expressions, from different writers on the Scriptures.

SCRIPTURE DIRECTORY.

GENESIS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book:

THE title of it signifies, *beginning* or *generation*. It gives us the history of the creation—The fall of man from God—The first promise of the Saviour—The rapid and general progress of sin and misery. Yet in the midst of this general apostacy, there are a few that continue faithful, such as Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah. This universal wickedness provokes Jehovah to drown the whole world save righteous Noah and his family—The earth is repeopled: as men multiply, sin increases. They build a tower at Babel to defy heaven: God interferes, and disperses them into all lands—Jehovah calls Abraham to be the father of Christ, and of the church. In the family of Jacob the church is embodied, and separated from the world. The history of this church is here continued in the lives of the patriarchs in Egypt to the death of Joseph, with which the book of Genesis concludes; and contains the history of 2368 years: divided into three periods: viz. From the creation to the deluge 1656. From the deluge to the birth of Abraham 352. From the birth of Abraham to the death of Joseph, 360. In all 2368 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The creation of the heaven and the earth.
2. The sabbath and marriage instituted in Paradise.
3. Sin and death enter into the world. The Saviour promised
4. The dreadful effects of sin in Cain and his family.
5. Of the family of Seth, from whom Christ came.
6. God determines to destroy the world for sin.
- 7, 8. The Deluge.—Noah worships his deliverer
9. Noah's blessing, covenant, life, and death.
10. Noah's descendants in the new world recorded
11. The tower of Babel, and confusion of tongues
12. Abram called, and passing through Canaan goes into Egypt
13. Abram and Lot return from Egypt, and separate
14. The wars of Sodom, Lot taken, and delivered by Abram.
15. Canaan and a numerous seed promised to Abram
16. History of Hagar, her conversation with the Angel
17. Circumcision appointed : Isaac promised : covenant renewed
18. The Angels call on Abram in their way to Sodom.
19. Sodom destroyed.—Lot delivered.
20. Abram and Sarah at Gerar.—The conduct of Abimelech
21. Isaac born—Hagar and her son sent away
22. Abram offering Isaac.—The covenant confirmed by an oath.
23. Sarah's death and burial.
24. Abram sending his servant to take a wife for Isaac
25. Abram and Ishmael die . Jacob and Esau born
26. Isaac and Rebecca at Gerar.—The covenant renewed
27. Isaac blesseth Jacob in the room of his brother Esau
28. Jacob fleeing, the covenant renewed at Bethel
29. Jacob goes to Haran.—His marriages and riches
30. His history in Haran continued
31. He leaves Haran and is pursued by Laban
32. In his way to Canaan he wrestles with the angel
33. Esau meets Jacob in peace and kindness.
34. History of Dinah, Jacob's daughter.
35. Jacob meets God again at Bethel—Death of Isaac
36. The history and family of Esau.
37. Joseph's history begins—He visits his brethren
38. The history of Judah and his family.
39. Joseph arrives in Egypt and is imprisoned.
40. He interprets dreams in the prison.
41. He is released, exalted, and prepares for the famine
42. Joseph's brethren go down into Egypt
43. They go down a second time.
44. In returning home they are brought back to Egypt
45. Joseph makes himself known to his brethren.
46. Jacob goes to see Joseph in Egypt.
47. Joseph introduces his kindred to Pharaoh.

48. Joseph visits Jacob on his death-bed.
 49. Jacob calleth all his sons, blesseth them, and dies.
 50. His children bury him in Canaan.—Joseph dies.

Observations on Genesis.

In reading the Scriptures, the two grand lessons we have to learn are, TO KNOW GOD AND TO KNOW OURSELVES. Keep this always in mind. Whatever be the subject in hand, observe on all occasions, how the Holy God acts towards his creature man, and how man conducts himself towards his God and Saviour. This will lead you to understand the real character of both, which is the highest and best wisdom, the source of all happiness, and the road to glory,

In reading the book of Genesis, the Bible student, by observing all the way what God is doing, will find much to exalt his views of the wisdom, justice, and grace of Jehovah the Saviour. These views of faith will fill his soul with admiration, gratitude and praise ; and kindle in his heart a flame of love to such a God. From this faith and love, will spring up a blessed hope full of immortality ; then peace and joy will flow like a river—And the various views given us of human nature, through this book, are sufficient to humble us in the dust.

1. When all creation was finished, God looked upon it, and pronounced all things *to be very good*. But man was the crown of this lower world : he alone was made in the image of his God ; and into his hand was the dominion given. But sin entered into the world ; and what has it done ? It brought in death, and ruined a world. In Adam all have sinned : in Adam all die. “ By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Through sin, the enjoyment of paradise, and of God is lost !—but lo ! *Salvation* dawns on a lost world ! Grace begins to flow, the Saviour is promised : and a door of hope is opened to ruined man. The seed of the woman “ shall bruise

the serpent's head" is the earliest voice of mercy.—Now *sin and grace* have entered the same world. Two very opposite kingdoms are set up, that of Satan, and that of Christ. Two very different races of men appear and continue through all ages from Cain and Abel to this day: and they who are of the world, hate those that are of God.—See Gal. iv. 29.

2. The grand leading point which the Holy Ghost principally dwells upon throughout this book, is the history of the *holy seed*: the origin, progress, and preservation of the Church of Christ, which appears in Abel, and is carried on by Seth, Enoch, and others.—When apostacy spread in the race of Cain and deluged the world with wickedness, the true church almost disappeared; but God revived it in the person and family of Noah.—Soon after the deluge, sin again prevailed in general, as the building of the tower of Babel sufficiently proves. To save the church from ruin, God separated it from the world in the person of Abraham, and settled it by covenant in his family until the days of the Messiah. All nations besides were left in darkness, till the partition wall should be taken down in the death of Christ.

3. In reading this remarkable book, the bible student should keep in constant view, the *immense difference* between the church of God and the world. The saints, though few in number, and despised of the world, are most dear unto God. See his familiarity with Abraham his friend; his gracious visits to Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; and learn that God's delight and portion are his people. He enters into an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed; and often renews this covenant with the Patriarchs. He dwells amongst them, hides them under his wings, provides all needful good for, and showers his blessings upon them. All the world besides are suffered to sink into idolatry and death. What a high privilege then it is, to be in covenant with the God of salvation, and to abide in his church for ever!

4. In studying the book of Genesis, search for *Christ*;

for Moses wrote of him. More is said of him here than most men suspect. In truth, Jesus is the sum and substance of the whole book: he is all along set forth in types; and the whole history of Joseph is the history of Christ in a figure. The likeness of one to the other both in humiliation and exaltation, is peculiarly striking and instructive. He has his types in the pious before the flood: in Noah at the flood: and afterwards in all the Patriarchs. Whatever you read of the church of God, it must always be in connection with Christ, on whom the church is built. It is formed by him, and supplied out of his fulness. The church can nowhere be seen without Christ her head. And if we do not find Jesus in this book, we read without profit: it is a sealed book unto us. May the Holy Ghost shew us the Saviour, and draw us to him.

EXODUS.

The Form and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE title signifies *Departure*, or going forth. This is a book of miracles and types. Very wonderful things are here recorded in the dealings of God with Israel and other nations.—The book begins with shewing that the Lord looked down with pity on the affliction of Israel in Egypt, and heard their cry—He sends Moses to be their deliverer.—Inflicts ten dreadful plagues on Pharaoh.—Israel prepares to go out of Egypt for Canaan.—The sacrament of the passover is ordained to keep in memory this singular deliverance.—Israel go forth in triumph.—Pharaoh and his hosts pursue them, and are drowned in the red sea.—Jehovah gives a

signal token of his presence in the pillar of the cloud and fire : gives bread and flesh from heaven ; and water from the rock.—Israel march to Sinai, where Jehovah, through the mediation of Moses, delivers to them his holy laws ; moral, political and ceremonial laws, and ecclesiastical ordinances.

From ch. 25 to the end of the book, a most interesting account is given of God's establishing public worship for his church in the wilderness—He gives to Moses on Sinai an exact pattern of the tabernacle and all its furniture—He sets apart Aaron and his sons for the priesthood, to minister in holy things—He revives the sabbaths, which had been long neglected.—The tabernacle is soon finished, towards which the people contribute liberally and joyfully.—Now when all things are ready, the sabbaths restored, the priests appointed, and the tabernacle consecrated, Jehovah comes down, and his glory fills the house. Thus was the public worship of God the Saviour established for all generations—This book contains the history of 145 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The midwives commanded to slay the male children.
2. The birth, education, and marriage of Moses.
3. Jehovah conversing with Moses in the burning bush.
4. Moses going from Midian to Egypt at God's command.
5. Moses and Aaron deliver their message to Pharaoh.
6. The Lord encouraging Moses to go on with his work.
7. Aaron's rod turned into a serpent, the water into blood.
8. The plagues of frogs, lice, and thicks.
9. The plagues of murrain, boils, and hail.
10. The plagues of locusts and of darkness.
11. The death of the first-born threatened.
12. Passover instituted—first-born slain—Israel march out.
13. The first-born sanctified—the feast of unleavened bread.
14. Pharaoh pursuing Israel, is drowned.
15. The song of Moses and Israel on the shore—Marah.
16. Quails and Manna sent for food to Israel.
17. Waters given from the rock of Horeb—Amalek conquered.
18. A sweet interview between Moses and Jethro.

19. Solemn preparations to deliver the law.
20. The moral law of God given on Sinai.
- 21, 22, 23. Divers political laws delivered to Israel.
24. Moses called to the top of Sinai a second time.
- 25, 26, 27. Directions for the tabernacle and furniture.
28. Aaron and his sons appointed for the priesthood.
29. The ceremonies to be used on that occasion.
30. Further directions concerning the tabernacle.
31. Bezaleel and Aholab to erect the tabernacle.
32. The golden calf—Israel's punishment.
33. Jehovah conversing with Moses in the tent.
34. Moses spends another forty days with God on Sinai.
35. Contributions towards building the tabernacle.
36. They go on with the building.
- 37, 38. They make the furniture for the tabernacle.
39. The whole work finished and reviewed by Moses.
40. The tabernacle with all its furniture set in order—God comes down and takes possession of it.

Observations on Exodus.

1. In going through this book of astonishing miracles, mark *all that God is doing*, that you may know what a God you have to deal with. In viewing the tremendous judgments which he pours on the wicked, and the rivers of tender mercies which flow from him to his chosen people, you may form some proper conceptions of his justice and his grace. When you read of all the plagues of Egypt, the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts in the sea, and of the awful thunders on Sinai, learn, that to his enemies God is a consuming fire. Turn and view his kind conduct towards his beloved *Israel*. He pities their affliction and hears their cry; sends Moses to deliver them, and goes himself with him, and brings them out with a high hand. And all the way from the iron furnace to the promised land, his presence goes with them. He hides them under his wings: carries them in his bosom: supports them with all his power: and is unto them a sanctuary in the wilderness. What rich provisions he makes for them. He heals their sicknesses, gives them bread

from heaven, and water from the rock Christ. His glory fills the tabernacle, and the Angel of the covenant dwells in the midst of them all their journey through. Was there ever a people that had God so nigh unto them? And does not all this teach us to know him as the God of all grace?

2. Learn here also, that such is the unfathomable wisdom of God, that he can make the *same events* in his providence to be peculiar mercies to his church, and heavy judgments on his enemies. What is life to one, is death to the other. The sun that is light to Israel, is darkness to the Egyptians. The ten plagues are deep afflictions to Pharaoh and his people, and great comfort to the seed of Jacob. Whilst the destroying angel slays the first-born of the enemy, the blood of the paschal lamb defends the children of God. The sea which drowns all the hosts of Pharaoh, favours Israel's escape. The same pillar is light to one company and darkness to the other. From all this learn, what an immense difference it makes, whether God is for us or against us. "He is with us, whilst we are with him."

3. Having noticed the conduct of God towards Israel, now mark *their conduct* towards their great deliverer. This view is humiliating indeed! Jehovah had given Israel abundant proofs that he was their God, and almighty to save: behold, what base returns they make! With what reluctance do they leave the land of bondage, to go with the Lord to Canaan. What rebellion at the sea: and what loud murmurs all the way to the promised land. After all the instances of power and of grace which the Lord had manifested in their favour, they are still full of unbelief, murmurs, and rebellion: preferring Egyptian bondage to the land of rest; and dumb Idols to the living God. After all the miracles they had witnessed, they still ask, "Can God give bread in the wilderness?" and after all the signal proofs he had given them of his presence, they still enquire, "Is the Lord amongst us or no?" Such is fallen man; learn his character, and be humble.

4. We may learn also in the book of Exodus, that *the whole nation of Israel were formed into a CHURCH.* And this all must see, that understand the nature of God's covenant with Abraham. It was the covenant of grace; "made with him in Christ;" and contained in it all spiritual blessings. By virtue of it, he was to be the father of all believers to the end of the world. We should carefully *distinguish* between the covenant made with Abraham, and the covenant that was made with Israel on Mount Sinai. One was 430 years before the other. And when Moses speaks of the Sinai covenant he saith, "the Lord made not *this* covenant with our fathers, (the Patriarchs) but with us that are alive this day." Deut. v. 3. And Paul affirms, that the covenant of Sinai cannot disannul the covenant made with Abraham in Christ. (See Gal. iii. 17.) In the death of Christ, the covenant of Sinai was disannulled; but Abraham's covenant is still in force under the Gospel, and therefore is the covenant of grace; for it is made in Christ. Now *circumcision* was the seal of the covenant of grace made with Abraham in Christ, and not of the temporal covenant made on Sinai. It is a "seal of the righteousness of faith." Rom. iv. 11. The *whole nation of Israel received this seal of the covenant of grace, and so God established a National Church.* All their *children* were admitted into that national church, and this church was under the covenant of grace made with Abraham in Christ. We are this day under Abraham's covenant, though the seal is changed into one of a milder nature. Let us abide by the rule and order which God has established; for there alone can we find safety.

5. There are more *types of Christ* in this book, than in any other. Christ is the rock that followed Israel; the bread that fed them; the brazen serpent that healed them; and the angel that conducted them. He is the priest, the sacrifice, and the tabernacle. The whole history of Moses is the history of Christ in a figure. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me." Moses represents Christ as a Medi-

tor, Lawgiver, Deliverer, and Intercessor: as the Head of the Church: as the Guide and Saviour of Israel. To study the mediation of Moses will greatly help us to understand the mediation of Jesus; and to see how man is redeemed, and reconciled to God, and admitted into covenant and communion with him through a Mediator.

6. Likewise the whole pilgrimage of ancient Israel, from Egypt through the Red Sea, Wilderness, and Jordan to Canaan, is a lively type of *believers' journey* from the bondage of sin, through difficulties and temptations to the heavenly land of eternal rest. Their various trials: their singular deliverances: their numerous transgressions, and their high privileges: their whole conduct towards God, and his dealings with them; all these things shadow forth what fall to the lot of Christians in their way to Sion. Thus have I pointed out some of the grand subjects you are to study in the book of Exodus, and the Lord give you an understanding heart to discern and relish divine truths.

7. There is no book that gives us more *glorious and exalted views of God* than Exodus. Here he magnifies his power in the miraculous deliverances and preservations of his people. Here he demonstrates his truth and faithfulness in keeping covenant and promise with Abraham's seed. Here his singular providence appears in preserving, increasing, and delivering his church. Here he manifests himself a God of infinite holiness, justice, and grace, in all the laws which he gave to Israel. And here he gives his people the strongest encouragements to depend upon him in their deepest trials and afflictions.

LEVITICUS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT is called Leviticus because it treats of the Levites and their offices. It is a book of *Ecclesiastical laws*; and of instructions how the service of God is to be conducted under the law. The book of Exodus ended with an account of Jehovah's taking possession of the tabernacle. The book of Leviticus goes on to shew *what God did in the tabernacle*.—From over the mercy-seat, he delivered to Israel, by Moses, the various ordinances they were to observe in their generations, as the church of God.—And first of all, Jehovah appoints the sacrifices they were to offer up to him; gives directions how this was to be done; by whom, and on what occasions—Next he delivers laws for the priests, to direct them in the various branches of their holy office: especially the manner that all kinds of sacrifices were to be offered up to God—Moses, by divine commission, consecrates Aaron and his sons for the priesthood, and settles it upon their posterity until Messiah came—Two of the priests, Nadab and Abihu, are punished with death for their presumption and irreverence in the execution of their office.—From chap. x. to the end of the book, the Lord God delivers to Moses and Aaron a long catalogue of laws on a vast variety of occasions, which the priests and the people were to observe in their generations.

The whole of this book takes up but one month.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The law of the burnt offerings.
2. The law of the meat offerings.
3. The law of the peace offerings.

4. The law of the sin offerings.
5. The law of the trespass offerings.
- 6, 7. Directions to the priests respecting the offerings
8. The ordination of Aaron and his sons.
9. They enter on their office, and offer sacrifices.
10. The sin and ruin of two priests, Nadab and Abihu.
11. What beasts, birds, and fishes might be eaten.
12. The law respecting lying-in women.
13. Rules respecting the plague and leprosy.
14. Ceremonies at the cleansing of the leprosy.
15. Law respecting issues.
16. The high priest going into the Holy of Holies—scape goat.
17. Laws respecting the blood of slaughtered beasts, &c.
18. Warning against idolatry and improper marriages.
19. Moral and ceremonial laws repeated and explained.
20. Of Mol. ch—Cursing Parents—Unleanness—Witches
21. Laws for the mourning and marriages of priest
22. Laws about eating of the sacrifices.
23. Laws concerning various stated feasts.
24. Laws of the oil for lamps—shew bread—and blasphemy.
25. Laws of the sabbatical year—and of Jubilee.
26. The benefits of keeping the sabbath and sabbuary.
27. Law of various vows to God—and of tithes.

Observations on Leviticus.

1. This book is the Gospel of the Old Testament, and is the same with that in the New, only delivered in a darker manner; in types, in shadows, and ceremonies. The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world is the substance of all that is here taught and done.—The priesthood of Aaron, the tabernacle, and its furniture, the altar and the sacrifices, were all shadows of better things to come, even of Christ and redemption. Compare the Epistle to the Hebrews with this book, and the whole will be explained, and all will guide you to Christ crucified. All the offices of Christ, and all the benefits of his redemption, are here set forth in types and shadows: some set forth his spotless character: some his atonement and his taking away of sin: and others shew how he pardons, purifies, and saves his people. There is not one thing that Christ is

to his church, but is taught by something or other in the book of Leviticus. We read here of a great variety of sacrifices, and we should understand in what respect each of them represented the Redeemer: how they were offered up; and the benefits derived from them.

BURNT OFFERING—Was the principal sacrifice of all. It was killed and prepared by those that brought it. Then the priest sprinkled the blood, and burnt the sacrifice on the altar. All this to teach us that Christ is slain by sinners and for them; that he suffered in the fire of God's anger; and with his blood sprinkled the throne; and so made atonement for us. This was a voluntary sacrifice, and was wholly consumed, to shew that Christ of his own free will would offer himself wholly for us.

MEAT OFFERING.—This also was prepared by the people, and offered by the Priest. Only a part of this was burnt, the rest reserved for food for the Priests: to shew that Christ is the bread of life. *Oil* was always mixed with it. The influences of the Spirit are always necessary before we can feed on Christ. *Frankincense* was also added to represent the intercession of Christ. And the *salt* of the covenant was put on every oblation, to shew that Christ is, and that we must be, sincere and pure in heart, faithful and steadfast in covenant. This meat offering is Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. Feed on him, and live for ever.

PEACE OFFERING.—The person that offered this sacrifice, laid his hand on the head of the animal; transferred his sins upon it, and then killed it: and the Priest burnt part of it on the altar. We behold here our sins laid on the Lamb of God who was slain for us, and is our peace. Jesus reconciles man to God, and God to man, and believers to one another, and gives peace in the conscience. The peace offering was laid on the burnt offering to shew that our peace is built on the atonement. The burnt offerings were wholly consumed; part of the meat offering was

reserved for the Priest : but the peace offering was divided between the altar, the Priests, and the offerers ; and formed a kind of a feast for the Lord, his Priests, and his people together.

SIN OFFERING.—This also was a burnt sacrifice, which God required, both stately, and also whenever the rulers, priests, or people sinned through ignorance in *religious* matters. Part of this was burnt upon the altar, and the remainder carried without the camp, and burnt there, to represent Christ our sin offering dying for us without the gates of Jerusalem. Heb. xiii. 12.

TRESPASS OFFERING.—This likewise was a burnt offering which God required. It was only occasional ; and required when men sinned against their neighbours, or broke the ritual law, or when they injured man by sins against God. Trespass offerings were chiefly for sins against man, and sin offerings for sins more immediately against God himself.

Besides all these offerings, *Aaron* the high priest, in his ministerial character, was a most striking type of Christ. View the likeness. Aaron is called of God to be an high priest, and anointed to the office. He goes in before the people ; offereth sacrifice for them ; enters into the Holy of Hollies, and there maketh intercession for Israel. In all these things and in every branch of his holy office, he sheweth forth our great High Priest over the house of God, in what he is doing for us. So Moses wrote of Christ ; and when he came the shadows fled away.

2. The blessed offices of the *Holy Ghost* are likewise shadowed forth in this book. What mean all the washings, purifications, and cleansing from leprosy and other defilements ? Are they not shadows of the purification which all believers receive by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the *Holy Ghost* ?—The *Oil* that was constantly used, was a standing emblem of the unction of the Spirit. Moses in consecrating the priests, after he had washed them with water, and clothed them with holy garments, anointed them with

oil to sanctify them. He also anointed the tabernacle, and all that was therein with oil. He poured oil on the sacrifices, and sprinkled the altar with it seven times. Chap. viii. All this was to teach us the offices of the Holy Ghost.

3. And there is something in every sacrifice and offering to teach the worshippers of God *what manner of men they are to be*. None but clean animals were offered. Neither the fierce lion, the subtle fox, the voracious dog, the venomous serpent, nor filthy swine were allowed: and this to teach us that we must not resemble the animals that were rejected. God chose the patient useful ox, the meek and quiet lamb, the loving harmless dove, to shew what must be the character and disposition of true worshippers. The animal was *slain*, and the *whole* of it offered to the Lord, to shew that we must devote our whole selves to God, and die to sin. The *legs* and *inward parts* were washed with water; our hearts and lives must be holy. The *finest* of the wheat was offered, with *oil and frankincense* poured on it, to shew that we must offer the best we have to the Lord, and that by having the sweet influence and grace of the Holy Ghost upon us. *Salt* was put upon the sacrifice, certainly to represent the grace of the Holy Spirit, which purifies the heart and makes our conversation savoury. “Let your conversation be seasoned with salt.” No *leaven* must be in the sacrifice; no leaven of malice, wickedness, and hypocrisy must be in what we offer to the Lord. What mean all those *washings and purifications* of the unclean; but to shew us our need of being cleansed by the Holy Ghost through the blood of Jesus? Above all, every sacrifice and offering were designed to teach us our *infinite obligations* to the Saviour for offering up himself in our stead; and the love and service we owe to him. May the Holy Ghost incline us to live on Christ and for his glory.

NUMBERS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT is a narrative of Israel's pilgrimage; and called *Numbers*, because of the repeated numbering of the people. It is about equally divided between histories and laws intermixed. *Exodus* brings Israel to the foot of Sinai, and relates the laws that were given to them. *Leviticus* relates how God established the affairs of his church, during the month they tarried there. *Numbers* records Israel's journey from the foot of Sinai to the borders of Canaan. They prepare to go forward before they march they are divided into four companies, under different leaders: the care of the tabernacle and its furniture is committed to the Levites. This preparation takes up the first eight chapters.—They march forward guided by the pillar.—When the cloud covers the tabernacle, they rest: when it is taken up, and the appearance of fire is on the tabernacle, they blow the silver trumpet and go on.—In three days they murmur, and loathe the manna; and are destroyed by fire, and receive quails in anger.—The rulers go to spy the land, and give evil report of it; the people murmur, and the Lord swears they shall not enter in.—Divers laws are delivered respecting the service of God: Corah, with two hundred and fifty princes, rebel and die.—The people murmur for want of water; Moses gives them water out of the rock.—Aaron dies.—The people murmur because of the difficulties of the way: are bit by serpents, and healed.—They now have wars with heathen kings.—Balaam tries to curse them, and fails. In the last year of their pilgrimage, none that were numbered at Sinai are left, save Caleb and Joshua. Moses writes down the forty-two journeys they had taken: delivers divers laws from the Lord: appoints inheritance for the two tribes and half; directs how Canaan is to be divided; appoints cities for the Levites, and cities of refuge.

This book contains the history of above 38 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The children of Israel are all numbered.
2. The order in which they are to march settled.
3. The employment of the Levites during their journey.
4. Particular families employed in the tabernacle.
5. Of lepers—restitution—and adultery.
6. The Nazarite's vows, rules, and sacrifices.
7. Offerings of princes at the dedication of the sanctuary.
8. The lamps lighted—the Levites consecrated.
9. The passover—the pillar guiding Israel.
10. The silver trumpets—Israel march to Paran.
11. Israel weeping for flesh : Moses for help : God is angry.
12. Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses.
13. The spies sent to search the land of Canaan.
14. Effects of their report, and God's judgment on the people.
15. Regulations respecting various offerings.
16. The sin and ruin of Corah and his company.
17. Aaron's rod buds, and bears almonds.
18. The portion of the priests and Levites.
19. The waters of separation for purification.
20. Moses smiting the rock—Death of Aaron and Miriam.
21. The fiery and brazen serpents—Kings conquered.
- 22, 23, 24. The history of Balaam and Balak.
25. The sin and death of Zimri and Cozbi.
26. The people numbered by divine command.
27. Moses warned of his death—Joshua appointed.
28. Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices.
29. Offerings by fire on three great festivals.
30. The vows of men and women in several cases.
31. Conquest of Midian and distribution of the spoil.
32. Reuben and Gad receive inheritance on this side Jordan.
33. Two and forty journeys already travelled, recorded.
34. The boundaries of Canaan, and who should divide it.
35. The cities of the Levites and cities of refuge appointed.
36. Rules respecting the inheritance of daughters.

Observations on Numbers.

1. In reading this book, mark what *peculiar regard* God has for his chosen people. All Israel were admitted into external covenant with God, and were professedly his church. Although this does not secure to them eternal salvation, yet as his professing people are they partakers of high privileges. And amongst

them were always found numbers of spiritual believers, reconciled to God by virtue of their union with Christ, and brought within that internal covenant which secures everlasting life ; and for their sakes, God speaks of the whole nation as dear unto him. He hands down to all generations the history of his beloved Israel, when in their lowest state wandering in a forlorn wilderness ; whilst many great and flourishing empires are passed by in silence, or only noticed to complete the history of Israel. God regards the smallest number in covenant with him, more than all the world besides.

2. We learn here also, that Jehovah guides his people *in the right way* all their journey through. His pillar shall direct them when to move, and where to rest. Our guide in the heavenly road is the word of God : following this we cannot err : every other guide would lead us wrong, and we should be aware that our very nature as sinners is to depart from God. Many talk of following the pillar and the cloud, while they neglect the written word : act as this directs, and then you follow the leadings of Providence, and go in the right way to Canaan. Therefore in all things consult the word of God and obey it.

3. God's redeemed people, in all ages, have a *wearisome pilgrimage* through this wilderness to the land of rest. Painful difficulties and fiery trials shall attend them all the way home ; for so has God ordained. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Thousand voices cry through this distant land, "This is not your rest :" it is to come. As Christ was, so must his children be, poor, afflicted, and rejected of the world : we must be made in the likeness of his death, that we may be in the likeness of his resurrection. In all your sorrows here, keep in constant view the glory to come, "looking unto Jesus, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds."—We see here, that the highest in God's favour may be the deepest in tribulation ; and the heirs of all things the furthest from worldly prosperity. No nation so near unto God as Israel, and none so afflicted. Whilst graceless nations roll in affluence, and abound

in mirth in lands of peace, God's beloved Israel wander afflicted in a strange and barren land. But after they suffer awhile, they that believed enjoy the promised rest in Canaan. So shall the righteous go from tribulation to eternal rest.

4. We learn here also, that the men of grace generally receive the *highest tokens of God's peculiar care, when under the darkest dispensations.* What miracles are wrought for Israel, whilst wandering in the wilderness. When all comforts are fled, God is nearest. When they are at the lowest, they receive the strongest expressions of his concern and power to save. Learn here that sharp trials and temptations do not drive the Lord away; but draw his compassions down. A life of affliction is a blessed life, when it weans us from earth, teaches our need of Christ, and drives us under his wings. Dread sin, which alone separates from God. He never quarrels with his children because they are poor and afflicted, tried and tempted. Nay, the deeper they are in trials, the more he pities them. Who had God so near unto them as Israel in the wilderness?

5. But mark *man's ingratitude.* In the midst of marvellous mercies, the unbelievers in Israel quarrel with God, whose kind indulgence could not still their murmurings. They with wonder view the manna descending from the skies, the water flowing from the rock, and the pillar guiding them in the way, yet soon grow discontented. They behold the glory of the Lord filling the temple, hear his voice from over the mercy seat, and have full proofs of his presence with them, yet daringly blame his conduct. The hearts of all those that believed not were set more upon Egypt than upon Canaan, and what wonder that they never entered in.—Learn by this, what a perverse creature is man. God's tenderest dealings cannot allay his passions. But see the event, “They perished in the wilderness through unbelief.”

6. They who murmured *did not escape unpunished.* “The heavy wrath of God fell upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them.” The sins of idolatry, discontent,

and ingratitude, are bad in all; but intolerable in those who profess themselves to be the people of God. The Lord hates sin in all, but most of all in those that are nearest unto him, and under the strongest obligations to serve him. Whenever Israel murmured, some heavy judgments fell upon them to punish the wicked, and to purify the righteous. When the Lord visits us with a rod, let us say, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing; but let thy loving corrections make me great, and take away my sin."

7. The church of God on earth is, in all ages, a *mired church*; but in the great day, it shall be purified, when all the righteous shall be separated from the wicked, to meet no more for ever. Good and bad will remain in the gospel net till it is drawn to land: wheat and tares will grow on gospel ground until the harvest: wise and foolish virgins will remain together till the bridegroom comes to take his children home. Happy they who shall be found ready at his coming. We see that it will avail us nothing at the last that we were admitted here into external covenant with God by baptism, except we receive grace to renew our hearts, and bring us in a spiritual sense into covenant with God in Christ.

DEUTERONOMY.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE title of it implies, *the law repeated*. When Moses had conducted Israel to the borders of Canaan, over against Jericho, he made a stand for one month, and there delivered this book to the new generation,

which had sprung up since Israel had received the law on Sinai. In this admirable book, Moses takes a two-fold view : one back on the wilderness ; the other forward to Canaan.

He looks *back*, and begins at Sinai, and surveys the journey from thence to Jordan, and relates, in the most pathetic manner, to this new generation, how very disobedient and rebellious their fathers had been : also sets before them, in the most moving strain, the miracles, the patience, and loving kindness of Jehovah towards Israel all the way. He also repeats the laws and ordinances which God had given them, explains and applies them to the people, and exhorts them most earnestly to obedience—Several new laws are added.

Moses likewise looks *forward* towards Canaan : describes the riches and glory of that land, and assures Israel that God will put them in possession of it. He most solemnly warns them against idolatry, and all kinds of departure from God : exhorts them with all earnestness to cleave stedfastly unto the Lord for ever ; to obey his laws, and to keep his statutes and ordinances : promising, that so long as they did so, God would shower his blessings upon them. At the same time, threatening, in case they departed from God, and disobeyed his laws, that all the curses in this book, would be their portion. Towards the close of the book, he delivers many remarkable prophecies and the most interesting speeches : blesseth the twelve tribes, and foretells their future lot. From the top of Nebo, he views the promised land and leaves the world.

This book includes a period of one month only.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Moses relates their journey from Horeb to Kadesh.
2. Of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Heshbon.
3. The kingdoms of Og—Sihon given to Israel.

4. Exhortations to cleave to God and avoid idolatry.
5. The laws which Jehovah delivered at Horeb.
6. Exhortations to obey the laws of Jehovah.
7. Canaan to be conquered and idolatry destroyed.
8. Obedience enforced by many powerful arguments.
9. That rebellious Israel could not deserve Canaan.
10. God's mercies rehearsed as motives to obedience.
11. Obedience and blessings, disobedience and curses.
12. Of the worship of God, and of idolatry.
13. Enticers to idolatry to be stoned to death.
14. Of clean and unclean beasts—and of tithes.
15. The seventh year, a year of release.
16. How the three great annual feasts were to be kept.
17. Cases to be tried by Judges and Priest—of kings.
18. Levite's portion—of Christ—of Diviners and Wizards.
19. Cities of refuge—The punishment of false witnesses.
20. The laws of war laid down and explained.
21. Of murder, marriage, first-born, and rebellious sons.
22. Immodesty and all uncleanness condemned.
- 23—26. Divers laws for Church and state.
27. Of mount Ebal and mount Gerizim.
28. The blessings on obedience—the curses for disobedience.
29. Israel urged to stand fast to the covenant of God.
30. The future prosperity of the obedient foretold—Exhortation.
31. Israel encouraged—Their apostacy foretold.
32. The admirable song of Moses.
33. Moses pronounceth the blessings of the twelve tribes.
34. Moses views the promised land and dies.

Observations on Deuteronomy.

In reading this most interesting book, peculiar attention should be paid to the *character of Moses*, who was of all others the most lively type of Christ. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me." Moses was a typical Mediator between God and the people, whom he rescued from slavery and conducted towards Canaan, and for whom he interceded, when God's anger kindled against them. Herein he represented the Saviour as lawgiver, mediator, and intercessor, as leader and commander of the people.

And this book, above all others, calls our attention to the *moral law*, which is here repeated, explained, and enforced. It is in its nature a law which can never be altered, in the smallest degree, because it proceeds from the nature of God who changeth not; it is a revelation of his will, and a transcript of his eternal mind. We are for ever bound to obey this law, which is the law of creation, and ariseth from the relation between God and us; and whilst this relation exists, the law must demand our obedience. In whatever state or condition man is found, the whole law is the unchangeable rule of his duty. And the law always requireth, and will accept of no less than perfect and sinless obedience of all mankind under every dispensation. For instance--Adam in Paradise, who had the law written on his heart, and given to him in the form of a covenant of works, was bound to obey it perfectly. All sinners out of Christ are under Adam's covenant, and the law demands of them perfect and sinless obedience, though they have lost the power and principle of obedience: therefore are they under condemnation, and cannot obtain life but by fleeing to the Saviour: (see Gal. ii. 16.) And even believers in Christ who are under a covenant of grace, and delivered from the condemnation of the law, are bound to obey perfectly every precept of the moral law, not as a condition of life, but from an obligation to do the whole will of God. And the higher our privileges, the stronger our obligations to please God. Believers in Christ are deeper in his debt than Adam in Paradise. To be saved by grace can never absolve us from our obligations to do the whole will of God as revealed in the law. And though love be the principle from which believers do obey, yet the whole law is for ever their unchangeable rule of obedience.

Israel in the wilderness had the laws of God delivered unto them, and were exhorted in the most solemn manner possible to obedience, and encouraged to this by exceeding great promises. "Hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I

teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you." But Israel proved unbelieving and rebellious, and would not obey the Law of the Lord, when surrounded with miracles of mercies : and the consequence was, that the whole of the generation which came out of Egypt fell in the wilderness. " The Lord was wroth and severe, saying, surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land, save Caleb and Joshua." This should teach us that the greatest privileges, without the grace of obedience, can avail us nothing. They had Abraham to their father, and God near unto them, yet could not enter into the promised land because of their unbelief and disobedience. God raised up a new generation in the wilderness, a holy nation blessed with obedient faith, and of these the Lord saith, " They shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it." He performed his promise, and planted the land of Canaan with a right seed.—Yet whole chapters of the most pressing exhortations to obedience are given to these ; which clearly proves that the best of men are prone to backslide, and to return from God to idols ; but through faith these entered in and inherited the land which the Lord had promised.

We, like Israel, shall soon finish our pilgrimage, and stand on the brink of that deep river which divides time from eternity. Let us now, after the example of Moses and Israel, look back on the way we have travelled, and forward to eternity, and ask ourselves what manner of men have we been, and what are our prospects in the world to come.

I. *Look back, and review your whole life.*

1. What has it been, and how have you conducted yourself towards your God and Saviour ? Have you answered the end of your creation and redemption ; lived to his glory, and prepared for eternity ? Have you walked in the ways of the Lord, done the work, and improved the talents which he has given you ? Should you neglect this enquiry, you cannot tell but

your life is murdered and your soul ruined. Say then, " I will hear what the Lord God saith concerning me."

Do you resemble this *pious generation* which goes into Canaan ? Have you returned unto the Lord with all your heart, and surrendered yourself unto him as your Sovereign and Saviour ? Your salvation turns on this point. Have you the precious and lively *faith* of the Gospel, which beholds the glory of the Saviour ; flees to him and feeds upon him ?—What is the *temper* of your heart towards Christ ? do you truly love and fear him, and delight in him as the source of all your happiness, and your inheritance for ever ?—What has been your *conduct* towards the Saviour ? have you entered into covenant with him ; enlisted under his banner ; obeyed the laws of his kingdom ; and served him with a faithful and true heart ?—Have you *put off* the old man, and *put on* Christ ; crucified the flesh, and overcome the world ? Have you lived godly in Christ Jesus, sold all, denied yourself, and followed him ? Have you set your affections on things above, ran the heavenly race, and fought the good fight ? In a word ; have you lived as a man of God, and followed the Lord fully ? Then you resemble Caleb and Joshua. " Be strong and of good courage, fear not, for ye shall go in to possess the land." Deut. xi. 31.

Or do you resemble that *unbelieving and disobedient* generation which perished in the wilderness ? Have you, like them, proved rebellious and impenitent, unthankful and unholy ? Have you continued under unbelief and hardness of heart, forgetting the God of your mercies, and ready to rebel when his providence disconcerted your plans of pleasure and pursuits ? If you have not lived the life of faith and holiness, but have walked according to the flesh, being earthly, sensual, and devilish ; then have you trod correctly in the steps of that generation, of whom the Lord swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest : and how can you escape ? Return, or you die !

2. Next, review the *conduct of God* towards you all your life long till now. "Remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee." Deut. viii. 2. With what tender care has he watched over your life from the womb till now? Has not he constantly and mercifully supplied all your wants; pitied you with the bowels of a tender father under all your sufferings, and drew you out of many waters? He has known your soul in adversity, and loaded you with his benefits, He so loved you that He gave his Son to die for you, and sent his Spirit to be your new creator, comforter, and guide. And with what long suffering and patience has he borne with your manners! He has spared you from hell as often as you have sinned against heaven: and your sins have been like the sand on the sea shore, innumerable. Surely goodness and mercy have followed you all the way. Feel and acknowledge your endless obligations; love and serve your God with a true heart, and praise him whilst you have your being.

II. Next look *forward*.—As Moses and the people looked towards Canaan, let us look towards the eternal hills. Be no stranger to that world where you must shortly take up your everlasting abode; much is revealed; "life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel." Look often within the veil, familiarize your mind with the grand realities of immortality. The moments you have, before you go through Jordan, are important: life or death, eternity of joy or torment depend upon them. "Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God; and a curse if ye disobey him, and go after other gods." Deut. xxviii.

1. Would you inherit the *blessing* in the land of rest? Then live as God directs. "And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and serve him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes for thy good." "Let these be within thy heart, talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou

walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up," &c. Deut. vi. Murder not the precious moments which are between you and death ; but devote them to the vast concerns of eternity. Keep the heavenly land in view, and set your heart upon it ; go up out of the wilderness leaning upon your beloved, and hold on your way till you come to Zion with everlasting joy upon your head, and inherit the blessings for ever.

2. Should you forsake the Lord your God, and trifle away your life in vanity, what can you look for in the world to come, but all the *curses* of this book ? God has decreed, that the hypocrite, the slothful servant, the unjust steward, the foolish virgins, the Pharisee and the profligate shall perish in one common fire.—The proud, the worldling, the malicious, and the liar shall have their portion in the lake. “ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God.” Would you escape their torments ? Then depart from their ways, and forget not the covenant of your God. “ But if ye do evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoke him to anger, or if ye do at all forget the Lord your God ; I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall utterly perish, because ye would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God.” We have here several whole chapters of pathetic *exhortations* to cleave to the Lord, which prove our proneness to depart, and the danger of backsliding. Abide with God, that it may go well with you both here and hereafter.—Whilst on this side the river, send *faith to spy the land*, and to bring you of the fruits of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Set your heart on the holy land. “ It is a good land, go up and possess it.”

THE
HISTORICAL BOOKS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

All the Books from the beginning of Joshua to the end of Esther, are called *Historical*; as they contain the only history that God hath given of his church from the time that Israel entered into Canaan, to the time they returned from Babylon; a period of rather more than a thousand years.

JOSHUA.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT records the history of Israel under the government of Joshua, the successor of Moses, and may be divided into four parts.—*First*, their entering into Canaan, and their conduct upon their admission. Chap. i. 5.—*Secondly*, their conquering and destroying the nations of Canaan. Chap. vi. 12.—*Thirdly*, how the land was divided amongst the tribes of Israel. Chap. xiii. 21.—*Fourthly*, how God's religion was established by Joshua, just before he died.

This book contains the history of about 17 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The Lord encouraging Joshua, and he the people.
2. The two spies lodge at Rahab's house in Jericho.
3. Israel passing through Jordan to Canaan.
4. A monument erected on Canaan's shore.

5. Circumcision and the passover observed.—Manna ceased.
6. The city of Jericho taken and destroyed.
7. The sin and punishment of Achan at Ai.
8. Ai taken.—An altar built on mount Ebal.
9. The Gibeonites by fraud make a covenant with Israel.
10. The sun and moon stand still.—Five Kings slain.
11. The slaughter of Kings at the waters of Merom.
12. One and thirty Kings conquered by Joshua.
13. The portion of the two tribes and half.
14. Canaan to be given to the rest of the tribes.
- 15—19. How the land is to be divided: the lot of each tribe.
20. Cities of refuge appointed.
21. Cities appointed for the priests and Levites.
22. The two tribes and half go to their own land.
23. Joshua exhorting all Israel to cleave to the Lord.
24. Joshua's dying speech to Israel. *

Observations on Joshua.

1. In reading the books of Moses, we have seen much of God, in his laws, ordinances, miracles, and types of Christ. He is here going to instruct us in a new way, i. e. by *History*, which is both a pleasing and convincing method of teaching us the knowledge of God and of ourselves. Let us therefore observe carefully what God is doing among the nations, and what is his conduct toward his friends and enemies. Behold him governing the nations upon earth, and ordering all things in the kingdoms of men, according to his sovereign will: pulling down one, and raising up another, and giving the earth to whom he pleases. We learn by this, that the earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is; that his dominion is an universal dominion, which endureth for ever. We learn here also, " That he is a mighty God and terrible," by his judgments on the Canaanites, and his mercy to Israel.

2. How remarkable is the *loving-kindness* of the Lord Jehovah towards the people that are in covenant with him! all his favours are of mere grace. Why did he choose them? " Not because they were more in number; for they were the fewest of all people;" but his

blessing multiplied them as the stars of heaven. He could not choose them for any good he foresaw in them : for they proved most rebellious. He loved Abraham because he would love him, and chose his seed after him. " Not for your sake, O house of Israel, be it known unto you, that I have done this : but for mine own sake." Nor was the kingdom of Canaan given them as a reward of merit. " Not for thy righteousness or the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land ; but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he might perform the word which the Lord sware unto Abraham." Deut. ix. 5. After it pleased the Lord to make them his people, what tender care he takes of them ! His eyes are continually upon them : he hides them under the wings of mercy : conducts them in triumph to the holy land, and gives it to them for an everlasting possession ; wherein they find rest, and God dwelling in the midst of them. Learn by this kind conduct of Jehovah, how happy are the people that have the Lord for their God.

3. On the other hand, mark the *misery* of having God for our enemy. How terrible his vengeance on those that refuse to serve him, and provoke his anger. See this in his tremendous judgments on the Canaanites, who had rejected him to go after idols, and would not retain the knowledge of the Most High : therefore his wrath came upon them to the uttermost. And when destruction came as a whirlwind, there was no deliverer. Their idols cannot save. Jehovah will not pity them. How naked the people which are forsaken of God ! When ruin comes, they can neither flee nor resist. All the kings of Canaan are numbered to the sword, and their land given to Israel. Learn here, that God is against those that are against him, and that none can save those whom he destroys.

4. Who can read the book of Joshua, and not see that the Lord of Hosts directs and governs *the wars of nations*? The battle is not to the strong : it is the Lord's, who giveth the victory to whom he will. And

it is the same with him to conquer by the few, as by the many. Numbers, courage, and skill, avail the Canaanites nothing, whilst Jehovah is on the side of Israel.

5. What the Lord is doing in Canaan, proves that his *providence* is over all things, and that he appoints the bounds of our habitation. He takes this beautiful land from its ancient inhabitants, and gives it to strangers, and appoints to each tribe its portion; to some more, to others less, as it pleased him. His providence presides over all our concerns: let us be satisfied with his appointments, and in all things give him thanks.

6. See how *punctual* God is to all his promises. Several hundreds of years had expired since he had first promised the land of Canaan to Abraham; but in due time he performed his word. Many and great difficulties lay in their way, yet the Lord levelled the mountains, opened the sea, and subdued warlike nations, in order to fulfil his word. And though Israel proved rebellious, and provoked him to anger, yet he remembered his holy covenant, and would not violate his promise. "To the land of Canaan they came." See how true the Lord is, and that there is no unrighteousness with him. He keepeth covenant for ever. When he speaks, he speaks for eternity, without shadow of turning. With him there is no yea and nay; but yea and amen. What implicit faith and firm confidence should we place in such a God!

7. Joshua was an *eminent type of Christ*. When you read of what he was to Israel, you read of what the true Joshua is to the universal church. Joshua was Captain of the Lord's hosts; a leader and commander of the people: sent of God and qualified for his office. He led Israel to battle; subdued their enemies, and made them triumph. He conducted them to the promised land, and gave it them as their inheritance for ever. In all these things we are instructed what Jesus is to us, and what benefits we may derive from him as the head of the church. Moses brought Israel from Egypt, through the wilderness, to the borders of the

promised land, and died. Thus the law is our school-master to Christ: but only Jesus the true Joshua brings us into God's promised rest.

J U D G E S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT consists of two parts—In the first sixteen chapters we have a brief account of the affairs of Israel, from the death of Joshua to the death of Samson. The Judges that governed Israel during this period, and the number of years that each of them governed was as follows ;—Othniel, 40—Ehud, 80—Baruk, 40—Gideon, 40—Abimelech, 3—Tola, 23—Jair, 20—Japhtha, 6—Ibzau, 7—Elon, 10—Abdon, 8—Samson, 20—(Eli and Samuel, the two last of the Judges, are recorded in 1st Samuel.) In the second part of the book of Judges, from chap. 16, to the end, we read of many singular events, which occurred during the government of the different judges, and which are placed together at the end of the book, that the thread of the general history might not be interrupted.—This book contains the history of 499 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

C H A P.

1. Several of the tribes make further conquest.
2. Israel falls into idolatry, and God's anger kindles.
3. Israel sin and suffer, and delivered by several Judges.
4. Barak conquers Sisera and destroys Jabin.
5. The Song of Deborah and Barak.
6. Israel for sin oppressed by Midian—Gideon raised.
7. Gideon with his 300 puts the Midianites to flight.
8. He pursues them until Midian is subdued.
9. Abimelech's conspiracy, wars, and shameful death.

10. Israel's idolatry, punishment, and repentance.
11. Jephthah makes a rash vow, conquers the Ammonites.
12. After Jephthah,, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, govern Israel.
13. An angel appears to Manoah and his wife.
14. Samson's riddle at his marriage feast.
15. Samson sets fire to the corn, and slays 1000 Philistines.
16. Samson betrayed, imprisoned, and put to death.
17. Micah's theft and idolatry : hires a Levite for his priest.
18. The Danites seek an inheritance and take Laish.
19. The dismal history of the Levite's concubine.
20. Destructive civil war on account of this concubine.
21. The losses of the ruined tribe of Benjamin made up.

Observations on Judges.

1. Jehovah himself was the *King of Israel* from the days of Abraham to Saul. 1 Sam. xii. 12.—When Israel were settled in Canaan, it pleased God to raise up **Judges** to govern them, as occasions required. These Judges were not crowned as Kings, and had not the power of Kings to make new laws: yet were appointed as superior officers and governors, under God, over all Israel. Their chief commission was to see that the religion of God was properly conducted by the priests as the laws of Moses directed: to oblige the magistrates to execute Justice in civil affairs according to the laws of Moses: and to be the chief commanders of armies in time of war.

2. We learn from the conduct of the nations of Canaan, and of Israel too, that the natural religion of sinners is *Idolatry*. Though Jehovah had told Israel often enough, that he was the **Lord** their God, yet they turn from him to idols. The Lord married them, set them apart for himself, loaded them with favours, wrought miracles of mercy in their behalf, and was in all things a father unto them, yet they forsake him for idols. Moses warns them most solemnly, before they go to Canaan, to g^tard against idolatry, threatening them with every curse if they forsake their God; yet they depart. **The Lord destroys before their eyes**

the nations of Canaan for their idolatry, yet Israel will follow their example and marry with them. Heavy judgments fall on Israel themselves, yet they refuse to be reclaimed; or if restored, they soon revolt. The highest privileges, and the deepest sufferings, could not keep God's peculiar people from idolatry, which plainly proves that every man is, by nature, an idolater, and averse to God. This strong propensity to depart from the Lord continues in man whilst sin dwelleth in him; for the very nature of sin is to draw us away from God: and nothing but the grace that fills all heaven can change our evil hearts.

3. Another lesson we learn here is, that *sin and punishment are inseparably joined together*. Whenever Israel as a nation fell into any sin, some judgment from the Lord fell upon them. And generally the Lord punished the sin of idolatry in his people by some nation of idolaters, that they might read their sins in their punishment. See the anger of God against the sin of uncleanness in the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin: and against backsliding in religion in all the sufferings that fell on Israel.

4. In the history before us, we see also, that the *nature and property of our God is ever to have mercy and to forgive*. Though Israel sinned away their mercies and brought down judgments, yet when the Lord saw their distress, and heard their groans, he pities his people, and delivered them out of all their troubles. The pious remnant in the land, always mourned for the sins that prevailed, and even the wicked cried when judgments came, and God heard their cries, and brought them out of their distress. All the Judges were raised up of God as deliverers of Israel out of some peculiar strait which sin had brought them into. And does not this prove that they were bent upon backsliding, and that God delighted in mercy? Throughout this book we see this chain—sin, judgment, repentance, and mercy.

5. And may we not fairly conclude that God designed these deliverers of Israel as types to prefigure

the *Great Deliverer* that was to come into the world ? The nature of their offices pointed out the works of Christ, who was to be a deliverer in time of need ; a promoter of true religion and happiness ; the captain of our salvation ; our governor and judge. To suppose that nothing in this book points to Christ, would be to deny that it is any part of God's Bible. If he is left out, it is nothing more than a civil history, and a dead letter.

RUTH.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT is the history of *a private family*, which lived in the days of one of the Judges, and belongs to the Book of Judges ; but, as it makes no part of the general history, is set here by itself.—Elimelech and his wife Naomi, were Israelites, who had two sons named Mahlon and Chilion. In time of a grievous famine, after they had spent their inheritance, they all wandered for sustenance into the country of Moab, where the two sons married wives and died : Elimelech died also. Some time after, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, set off for the land of Judah. On the road Naomi strongly advised her daughters to go back to Moab. Orpah did so ; but Ruth cleaved to her and to her God. They both came to Bethlehem, where they maintained themselves by gleaning in the fields of Boaz, a rich and pious man who treated them kindly, and afterwards married Ruth, who bears to him Obed, the grandfather of David, and from whom Christ descended.

Observations on Ruth.

1. We learn here that the *providence of God* is over the domestic concerns even of the poorest families,

as exemplified in the family of Elimelech.— How mysterious and unaccountable are many things in providence till events explain them. God fixes upon some point which shall come to pass, though now distant and invisible. He ordains a chain of events, which shall gradually lead to this point. This chain is often long and intricate, and what it is designed to produce at last, is not all understood for the time. There was a point he had fixed upon respecting this family, and that was, that a poor girl in an heathen land should come into it, and be a branch of the family of the Messiah, and to this event every circumstance leads. Not a link can be taken out, or the whole chain is broken, and the point lost. Had there been no famine in Canaan, Elimelech would not have gone to Moab ; had he not gone there, his son never would have married Ruth. Had Ruth not followed Naomi into the land of Israel, she never could have been the wife of Boaz, and the mother of Obed, from whom Christ descended. We see that God may employ famine, poverty, banishment, and the death of relatives to lead us finally to the greatest blessings.

2. Learn by this narrative what *constant changes* take place in a man's life on earth : he never continueth in one stay. He is raised up and cast down, and again exalted. He is made to weep and laugh by turns, to teach him how to be abased and how to abound, and to shew him the uncertainty of all below, and his constant dependence upon that God, who makes one rich and another poor : Naomi shall lose her inheritance, and Ruth shall possess the wealth of Boaz.

3. All things in God's word have some relation to *Christ* in one form or another : all lead to him, and terminate in him. The histories of many families are in themselves full as singular and interesting as that of Elimelech ; and doubtless we never should have read of this in the Bible, had it not been for the reference it has to Jesus our Lord who was to be the Saviour of the Gentiles, of which an intimation is here given by bringing in a Gentile woman, to be one of the pedigree

of the Messiah. Without the help of this book, it could not be proved by all the Old Testament that Christ was the promised Messiah.

SIX BOOKS OF KINGS.

Here a new Era commences, when the form of government in Israel is changed. Judges are rejected, and a king is crowned. It was the extreme wickedness of the sons, both of Eli and Samuel, that provoked the people to ask for a king. God gave the 'ule in anger, because his time to set up David was not fully come. Saul forfeited his crown through his disobedience to God, and was taken away in wrath. From this period, the Monarchical form of government continues ever afterwards in Israel whilst they are a nation. The six following books contain their history during the whole period they are governed by their own kings in Canaan. Though the whole be but one history, yet it is divided into three portions, thus:—The two books of Samuel give the history of the kingdom in its united state. The two books of Kings, when divided into two kingdoms. The two books of Chronicles of both, before and after it was divided, only they record but little of the separated tribes. The books of Chronicles give a summary view of the whole from the creation to the Babylonish captivity.—The whole period that the tribes of Israel were under the government of their own kings in Canaan, was 550 years. And all the time they lived in Canaan before they went to Babylon, was 906 years; viz. under Joshua, 17, under Judges to the death of Eli, 339, under Kings, 550. In all, 906.

I. SAMUEL.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

WE have here an account of the two last of the Judges, Eli and Samuel, and also of Saul, the first of the Kings.—Eli the high priest governed Israel

forty years; the account is short, and ends chap. iv. The profligacy of his sons brought sudden destruction on them and their family.—After Eli, Samuel, the last of the Judges, governed Israel for a time. He was a pious priest, an illustrious prophet, a zealous reformer, a great deliverer, and a mild judge; yet because of his sons, the people presumed to reject God, and desired to have a king like other nations. Saul is given them, who proves a curse and not a blessing. The kingdom is taken from him and given to David, a man after God's own heart, chap. xvi.—From here to the end of the book are recorded the illustrious acts of David, and the distressing persecutions which he endured at the hands of Saul.

This book contains the history of eighty years.

One of the grand boundaries of Scripture chronology is the time when Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, and in the four hundred and eightieth year from the time Israel came out of Egypt, (1 Kings vi. 1.)—viz. Israel in the wilderness, 40—Joshua, 17—Judges till Eli, 299—Eli, 40—Saul, (including Samuel's time,) 40—David, 40—Solomon before he began the temple, 4—which make in all exactly 450 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Hannah's prayer for a child; she receiveth Samuel.
2. Hannah's song—Eli's sons threatened with ruin.
3. The destruction of Eli's house revealed to Samuel.
4. The ark taken by the Philistines—Eli's house destroyed
5. The ark carried about to Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron.
6. The Philistines send the ark back to Beth-shemesh.
7. Samuel subdueth the Philistines at Ebenezer.
8. Israel ask for a king—their king described by Samuel.
9. Saul with Samuel, who speaks to him of the kingdom.
10. Samuel anointeth Saul whose heart is changed.
11. Saul conquers Nahash: the kingdom is settled on him
12. Samuel terrifies the people with thunder in harvest.
13. Saul deserted of the people, offers sacrifice.
14. Jonathan miraculously discomfits the Philistines.

15. Saul spares Agag, and loses the kingdom.
16. Samuel anointeth David—Saul sends for David.
17. Goliath's challenge ; David accepts it and slays him.
18. Saul envieth, feareth, and tries to ensnare David.
19. Saul tries to kill David, who flees to Naioth in Rama.
20. Jonathan's love to and covenant with David.
21. David eats hallowed bread at Nob and flees to Gath.
22. The priests slain for this by Doeg at Saul's command.
23. Saul pursueth David to Keila, Ziph, and Maon.
24. David cutteth Saul's garment at En-gedi.
25. The death of Samuel—David, Nabal, and Abigail.
26. David spares Saul's life, takes his spear at Hachilah.
27. David with Achish at Gath, and Saul seeks him no more.
28. The witch at Endor raises Samuel at Saul's request.
29. David is dismissed by Achish with commendation.
30. David recovers Ziklag from the Amalekites.
31. Saul and his sons are slain in mount Gilboa.

Observations on I. Samuel.

1. By looking at the vast *difference* we find in the leading characters recorded in this book, we must see that piety has infinite advantages over ungodliness. What a bright luminary is Samuel when compared with the sons of Eli ! And what a brilliant star is David compared with Saul ! The sons of Eli were priests as well as Samuel : but how widely different did they discharge their office ! Saul was anointed and crowned king as well as David ; yet one was a curse and the other a blessing to the nation. And what produced this difference but the grace of God ? Let us learn by such instances what immense difference it makes whether we are under the reign of grace, or under the dominion of sin.

2. The most eminent servants of God shall have a *suffering* life on earth ; this was the lot of Eli, Samuel, and David. They spent their days in trouble and sorrow, which plainly proves that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and that this is not the rest of the righteous. Whom God exalteth the world treads under foot. What deep waters did these holy men pass through, and what floods of tears have they shed

in the way to glory. Yet they had peace which the world cannot give, and bright prospects beyond it.

3. This book affords *solemn warnings for the ungodly*. It is evident that no outward privileges can defend them from ruin. The holy priesthood affords no refuge to the profligate sons of Eli; nor the kingdom of Israel to cruel Saul. Advancement is misery, where power is abused, and the privileges of the ungodly hasten their ruin. "The prosperity of the wicked shall slay them." A kingdom or the priesthood make the wicked worse. The ark of God itself proved a curse to the uncircumcised Philistines. They who forsake God in prosperity shall find no deliverer in adversity. Saul goes to a witch for help: and he who tried to kill David is suffered to kill himself. Sin leads on to ruin. Doeg the traitor turns murderer, and Nabal through covetousness loses all. Sin is the road to disgrace, misery, and death; yet how few believe this!

4. Here are many *useful instructions for the godly*. Learn of pious Hannah to pray and praise, and to devote your children early to the Lord. Learn, that as Eli would not correct his children they soon became his tormentors. Learn of Samuel to love the temple, to be full of integrity, to conquer your enemies by prayers, and to fill every station honourably. Learn of Jonathan to be stedfast in friendship, and to stand by your friends in adversity. Learn of Ahimelech to refresh the weary stranger; and of Abigail to be a peacemaker. Above all, learn of David to be patient in affliction, to wait God's time for what he has promised, to forgive your enemies, and to be zealous towards God.

5. The main design of the whole book is to direct our eyes to *Christ under the type of David*. When you read of his appointment to the kingdom, the violent oppositions he met with in his way to the throne, his deep afflictions, his great deliverances, and his final triumphs: in all this you see both David and Christ at one view, and these things are true of Christ in a higher sense than of David, though true of both.

II. SAMUEL.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THIS is the history of the reign of King David, and begins with the successful and honourable part of his character. It shews how he mounted the throne, subdued the house of Saul, and established himself in the kingdom; it proceeds to relate his brilliant victories; his zealous endeavours to promote true religion; to enlarge the territories, and to increase the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. In chap. xi. the dark part of his character appears, and his grievous sins are recorded. Then follows a long catalogue of domestic and public troubles with which the Lord punished him for his iniquities. He is brought to repentance, and praiseth God.

This book contains the history of 40 years.

David was crowned king at Jerusalem 1000 years exactly before Christ's baptism; and reigned over all the tribes as many years as our Lord lived on earth, viz. 32 years and six months.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. David's conduct when informed of the death of Saul.
2. A violent though short contest for the kingdom.
3. Abner, &c. goes over to David—Joab kills Abner.
4. Ishbosheth is slain, and the civil war terminated.
5. David anointed king at Hebron, he taketh Zion.
6. David fetcheth home the Ark to Zion.
7. David purposeth to build a temple: is hindered.
8. David obtains victories over surrounding nations.
9. David's kindness to Mephibosheth son of Saul.
10. David subdueth the Ammonites and the Syrians.
11. David's adultery and murder.
12. Nathan's parable: David's repentance: Solomon's birth.
13. Amnon and Tamar: Absalom's murder and flight.
14. Joab's contrivance to bring Absalom back.

15. Absalom's rebellion and David's flight.
16. Of Ziba, Shimci, Hushai, Ahithophel, and Absalom.
17. Hushai's counsel preferred to Ahithophel's.
18. Absalom slain by Joab. David's lamentation.
19. The king is brought back : Shimci begs pardon
20. Sheba's rebellion and death : Amasa slain by Joab.
21. Three year's famine: four battles with the Philistines.
22. A Psalm of thanksgiving for God's favours.
23. David's profession of faith in God's promises.
24. David numbers the people and is punished.

Observations on II. Samuel.

1. The leading character in this book is David.—In the *bright side* of his character we see much to admire, in a variety of striking instances. The grace of God taught him to wait patiently for a kingdom. He cannot endure the lies of a treacherous Amalekite, though he brings him a crown. How remarkable his forbearance and tenderness towards his bitterest enemies, and most violent persecutors ! He mourns bitterly even over Saul and Absalom when they fall in death, and blesseth those that had shewed them kindness. He bears patiently with rude Shimci, and other sons of Belial. How true in his friendship to Jonathan and others, that had shewed him kindness. With what gladness and joy does he conduct the ark to Zion ! And with what zeal and devotion does he propose to build a temple for the God of Israel. In all this, mark what grace produceth in the Saints.

2. Even holy David had his *dark side*. He fell into the grievous crimes of adultery and murder ; into the fault of multiplying wives and concubines, and the sin of numbering the people from pride of power. The strongest in grace are but reeds when left to themselves : they soon give proofs of deep depravity. What loud warnings are here to Christians to walk close with God, to avoid temptations, and to live in prayer. Sin gave David the deepest wounds, and how bitter his repentance ! Through the remainder of his life he cries, “ My sins are ever before me.” God deeply punished

him in his soul, in his family, and kingdom. His remaining years are spent in trouble and sorrow.

3. There are *loud warnings* to a variety of guilty characters given in this book. See how sudden the wanton murderers of Saul and his sons met with vengeance. Ahithophel, proud of wisdom to do mischief, proved himself a fool, by hanging himself. Absalom, a spoiled favourite, soon rebelled against his father, and was hanged by the hair he took pride in. Sheba, a man of Belial, who rebelled against his lawful sovereign, was killed by a woman, and cast like a dead dog over the wall. What solemn warnings are these, to murderers, to the self-conceited, to disobedient children, and to rebellious subjects.

4. There are also many *excellent men* whose example are here set before us: but none more eminent than Nathan, who faithfully reproved the king himself for his wickedness, to bring him to repentance. Many like Zadoc, Abiathar, and Araunah, cleaved stedfastly to the Lord in times of darkness and confusion.—Much of God's fidelity and all-sufficiency in delivering his faithful servants from all adversities, and in performing his promises, in spite of all difficulties, is seen in this book.

5. The reign of David King of Israel prefigures the reign of Jesus King of Zion, in a most eminent degree. Does David gain the throne in spite of all opposition? Does he reign in righteousness, seek the welfare and subdue the enemies of his people? Does he set before his subjects the brightest example of true holiness, fervent piety, and patient submission? How much more true is all this of Christ than of David? And doubtless the leading design of all we read of David's kingdom is to bring us to contemplate the Messiah's kingdom. Many of the Psalms could not be understood without these histories.

TWO BOOKS OF KINGS.

These contain the History of Judah and Israel under the government of Kings, from the days of David to the Captivity in Babylon. The history of both kingdoms is carried on together from the death of Solomon. But the difference between the kings of Judah and of Israel is more striking, both in their character and form of government.

1. The kingdom of *Judah was hereditary* in the House of David, according to God's appointment, and descended from father to son, from the coronation of David to the Babylonish captivity, a period of 510 years. During this long period there was not one revolution or civil war in Judah, an instance unequalled in the world. The kings of Judah, from David to the captivity, were in all 21. The time they reigned, and their characters, are by some thus described:—David the devout reigned 40 years.—Solomon, the wise, 40.—Rehoboam the simple, 17.—Abijah the valiant, 3.—Asa the upright, 41.—Jehoshaphat the religious, 25.—Jehoram the wicked, 8.—Ahaziah the profane 1.—Athaliah, 6.—Joash the backslider, 40.—Amaziah the rash, 29.—Inter-regnum, 11.—Uzziah, or Azariah the mighty, 52.—Jotham the peaceable, 16.—Ahaz the idolater, 16.—Hezekiah the reformer, 29.—Manasseh the penitent, 55.—Amos the obscure, 2.—Josiah the tender-hearted, 31.—Jehoahaz, 3 months.—Jehoiakim, 11 years.—Jehoiachin, 3 months.—Zedekiah, 11 years.—Till Jehoiachin's advancement in Babylon, 26.—The first four were all very wicked.—More than half of the whole were good king, and the good reigned much longer than the bad sort. The true worship in their time was kept up in the temple, and the kingdom prospered greatly.

2. The ten tribes under Jeroboam broke off all connexion with Judah, and established a government and a religion more congenial to their own depraved minds. Several of the kings of Israel were rebellious usurpers from any tribe as it happened. Their number in all from Jeroboam to the Assyrian captivity (a period of 311 years) was 19. The order and time they reigned as follows:—Jeroboam, 22 years.—Nadab, 2.—Baasha, 24.—Elah, 2.—Zimri, 7 days.—Omri, 12 years.—Ahab, 22.—Ahaziah, 2.—Jehoram, 12.—Jehu, 28.—Jehoahaz, 17.—Jehoahash, 16.—Jeroboam, 41.—An Inter-regnum, 22.—Zachariah, 6 months.—Shallum, 1 month.—Menahem, 10 years.—Inter-regnum, 1.—Pekahiah, 2.—Pekah, 20.—Inter-regnum, 7.—Hoshea, 9.—These were all idolaters, and most of them monsters of iniquity. When they filled up the measure of their sins, they were carried captive to Assyria, by Shalmaneser; from whence they never returned to this day.

I. KINGS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

WE have here the death of David. The peaceable and prosperous reign of Solomon: the fame of his wisdom, and the glorious temple which he built for the worship of God: then his awful fall and death.—Next the vision of the kingdom, and the reigns of four of the kings of Judah, and of eight kings of Israel.—The miracles of Elijah.—The book concludes with the reigns and death of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, and the appointment of their successors.

This book contains the history of 126 years.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

- 1 Adonijah aspires to the throne: Solomon appointed to it.
- 2 David dies: Solomon reigns and punishes David's enemies.
- 3 Solomon's marriage, great sacrifice, vision and wisdom.
- 4 Solomon's princes, officers, prosperity and fame.
- 5 Solomon's preparations to build the temple of God.
- 6 The building of the temple, with a full description of it.
- 7 Solomon's other buildings, and vessels for the temple.
- 8 Solomon dedicates the temple to God with great solemnity.
- 9 Solomon's covenants, cities, sacrifices, and navy.
- 10 The Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon.
- 11 Solomon's idolatry, his adversaries, and death.
- 12 The kingdom divided: Idolatry established by Jeroboam.
- 13 The man of God's prophecy against the altar at Bethel.
- 14 The wickedness, curse, and death of Jeroboam and Rehoboam.
- 15 The reign of Abijam, Asa, Baasha, Jehoshaphat, and Nadab.
- 16 The bloody contest of usurpers for the throne of Israel.
- 17 Elijah fed by a raven at Cherith, by a widow at Zarephath.
- 18 Elijah meets Ahab, by fire convinces Baal's prophets.
- 19 Elijah flees from Jezebel, and meets God at Horeb.
- 20 Ahab's great victory over Benhadad king of Syria.
- 21 Ahab by Jezebel obtaineth Naboth's vineyard.
- 22 Ahab is slain at Ramoth Gilead: Jehoshaphat's death.

Observations on I: Kings.

1. Peculiar notice should be taken of the *Temple* which God commanded Solomon to build; because it is the most eminent type of Christ in all the Bible. Here alone sacrifice is acceptable: here the mercy seat is erected: here the people are to worship, and here God is found. All this to lead us to God through Christ alone. From here to the end of the Old Testament, continual reference is made to the temple. God's great quarrel with his people is, that they have either profaned the temple, or departed from it, to go after idols, which is called their whoredom against the Lord who is married unto them.—See Jer. chap. 3. The chief work of most of the prophets was to cry against the great sin of offering sacrifices any where but in the temple, and to pronounce the heavy judgments that were coming on the people for their whoredom and backsliding from the Lord. By this learn that nothing grieves the spirit of God, and provokes his anger, like departing from Jesus, the true temple.

2. The *sin of Jeroboam* was one of the greatest that could be committed, both in its nature and consequences. He, to serve a base political purpose of his own, turned from God to idols, and drew ten of the tribes after him. This proves two points: that the bad example of one man may produce immense mischief; and that depraved mankind are very easily drawn into evil ways. We see also that when men depart from the appointed ways of God, and fall into one sin, it prepares them for another. When Israel became Idolaters, this led them to many other grievous crimes and horrid offences. No wonder, for when men leave God, they are on Satan's ground, and in his power.—But mark the consequence: Israel never prospered afterwards. Their defiled land became a land of war, confusion and trouhle. Departure from God must ever prove a source of misery, and the road to death.

3. We find throughout this book that *notorious offenders* are visited with signal vengeance, and often come to

a sudden and fearful end. Such was the lot of several of the wicked kings of Israel, whom God would not spare, and they could not flee.. Jeroboam turned the people from God to idols, and God turned him from the throne, and his family were soon destroyed, and the bones of his priests were burnt on the very altar which he had built at Bethel. Zimri the rebel burnt himself and his palace together. Ahab slew the prophets, robbed and murdered Naboth, and cleaved to idols: his carcase was given to the dogs, which licked up his blood. Ahaziah consulted the god of Ekron, and lost his life by it. These, with other instances, plainly shew how offensive sin is to God, and that the wicked shall not go unpunished.

4. *Elijah* was one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived on earth. In many respects very similar to Moses, and John the Baptist. He, as a lively type of Christ, was a bold reprover of sin in kings, priests, and people: a pattern of holiness, abstracted from the world, strong in faith, and patient in tribulation. God, to whom he was exceedingly dear, took peculiar care of him through life, and at length took him unto himself without seeing death. Every thing recorded of this man of God is highly interesting: his life and death were full of miracles, and designed to direct the eyes of mankind to the great Prophet that was to come into the world.

5. It is not the design of this book to teach us any particular points of doctrine, except what is taught of Christ in types: yet we have here lessons of high importance. We are instructed that the piety of kings preserves their kingdoms in unity and flourishing prosperity, as in the days of David and Solomon. We may look on the warlike and increasing kingdom of David as a representation of the state of the militant church on earth; and the peaceable and happy reign of Solomon as an emblem of the church triumphant in heaven. We are taught also, that the impiety and wickedness of kings and priests, produce divisions in kingdoms, and ruin on themselves and families. This

book shews us the great depravity of human nature, the rapid progress of sin, the long-suffering patience of God : and that whilst he is taking peculiar care of his church in perilous times, he will take vengeance on the impenitent.

II. KINGS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THIS is a continuation of the first Book of Kings, and formerly they made but one book. The history both of Judah and Israel is here carried on together.—It begins with Elijah's last miracles ; and proceeds to Elisha's many miracles.—Hazaël is anointed king of Syria to chastise Israel ; and Jehu is appointed to destroy the house of Ahab, and the worship of Baal.—The reigns of several kings in Israel and Judah.—The ten tribes carried captive to Assyria by Shalmaneser.—The reigns of Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Josiah, &c.—Jerusalem destroyed, and Judah carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

This book contains the history of 344 years.

In this second book of Kings, the history of Israel from Ahaziah son of Ahab, to the Assyrian captivity, is better than 185 years. And the history of Judah from Jehoshaphat to the Babylonish captivity, 344. We have in this book the reigns of 15 kings of Judah, and 11 kings of Israel.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Elijah calls for fire to consume Ahaziah's messenger.
2. Elijah taken up to heaven : succeeded by Elisha.
3. Jehoram and Jehoshaphat subdue Moab.

CHAP.

4. Divers miracles wrought by Elisha.
5. Elisha sending Naaman to be healed in Jordan.
6. Elisha blinds the Syrian hosts : famine in Samaria.
7. Samaria receiving plenty from the Syrian camp.
8. Hazael warned by Elisha.—Jehoram's sins and death.
9. Jehu made king, begins to destroy Ahab's family.
10. Jehu extirpates Ahab's family and Baal's prophets.
11. Athaliah murders all the seed royal of Judah but Joash.
12. Joash reforms abuses, backslides and is murdered.
13. Three kings of Israel. The death of Elisha and Hazael.
14. The reign of Amaziah, Jehoash, and others.
15. The reign of Azariah and several other kings.
16. Ahaz reigns wickedly, slays Rezin, and robs the temple.
17. Samaria is taken, and Israel carried captive.
18. Hezekiah's reign.—The blasphemous speech of Rabshakeh.
19. Hezekiah's distress.—An angel destroys the Assyrian army.
20. Hezekiah's recovery, and folly towards the Babylonians.
21. Manasseh and Amon's wickedness and death.
22. Good Josiah hears the law and consults God by Huldah.
23. Josiah works a great reformation and is slain.
24. Judah begun to be carried captive to Babylon.
25. Jerusalem destroyed.—Judah gone into captivity.

Observations on II. Kings.

1. We find that *Israel* who persisted in the sin of Jeroboam, to which they added divers abominable pagan idolatries, were plagued with wars, seditions, treasons, murders of kings, interruptions of government, alterations of the royal line, and other sad disasters of state: neither the counsels and warnings of the prophets, nor these heavy judgments, could bring them to repentance. At last they were carried captive by the Assyrians, and their land peopled by heathens.—*Judah* also fell. Though God's Church and worship was preserved among them, yet through the example of *Israel* and their own sinful propensity, they fell into idolatry and other grievous sins, from which they could never be thoroughly reclaimed. Neither the doctrines of the prophets, nor the endeavours of godly kings; neither the heavy judgments nor the singular mercies of God, could restore them. The

Chaldeans came, and burnt the temple, and carried the people captive to Babylon. And the remnant of the poor left in the land were soon carried to Egypt. Yet under this dreadful darkness of the Jewish nation, the Lord reserved an holy seed for his church, and continued David's line to bring forth the Messiah.

2. We now see both *Israel* and *Judah* gone into captivity in foreign lands. What an extraordinary event is this ! What a peculiar judgment on the Church of God, the seed of Abraham ! They are driven out of their beloved Canaan ; sold into the hands of strangers, and banished into heathen lands, from whence few ever returned. Great must be their sin : for great is the wrath gone forth against them. Israel were taken away at different times during the reigns of Pekah and Hoshea, their two last kings. Judah also after the death of Josiah, were draughted at different times during the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, their three last kings. Israel were taken to Assyria near 160 years before Judah went to Babylon.

3. In reading the histories of this book, mark the sin of *ambition*, and love of power. It is a boundless sin : it leads to the greatest cruelties ; it terminates in disgrace and ruin. In proof of this, take the following instances. The ambitious kings of Israel slew the prophets of the Lord, and set up false prophets, whom the Lord slew by hundreds in the house of Baal. Hoshea would reign, and slew Pekah his predecessor, but soon was he shut up in prison, and his people carried away captive. Jehoram, fearing that his brethren and the princes would lessen his influence, slew them cruelly. God smote him with an incurable disease, so that his bowels fell out. Joash who slew Zechariah for reproofing his idolatry, was slain by his own servants. Athaliah, in order to gain the throne, slew all the seed royal of Judah, with one exception, and she came to a fearful end. Uzziah, in his pride, assumed the priest's office, and whilst he had the censer in his hand to burn incense, was struck with leprosy, and continued

a leper to his death. Such examples should deter all ranks from the sins of ambition and cruelty.

4. *Elisha* is the leading character in this book : a very plain man ; but high in the favour of God, and abundantly honoured of him. He was the brightest luminary, and greatest ornament of his day. The spirit of the great Elijah was fallen upon him. He wrought divers miracles ; viz. divided the waters of Jordan with Elijah's mantle. Cured the unwholesome waters at Jericho. Brought destruction on the children that mocked him. Supplied three armies with water in drought. Increased the widow's oil. Raised the widow's son. Healed Naaman the leper. Put the leprosy on Gehazi. Made the iron axe to float. Smote the Syrian army with blindness. Foretold of plenty in Samaria : and of the death of Benhadad : and of the cruelty of Hazael who would reign in his stead. Thus was he honoured through life ; and on his death-bed a king wept on his neck : and when in the grave, a dead body that touched him came to life.

Elijah and Elisha were both in Israel, and were rather *extraordinary reformers* than common prophets. Though Israel was wholly given to idolatry, yet these two men by their zeal, counsels, and reproofs ; by their eminent sanctity and singular miracles, preserved a considerable degree of true religion, even in the land of Israel whilst they lived. After their death the land ripened for ruin. See what immense good a few eminent men may produce, and how dangerous to lose them ; for when these luminaries were set, the whole land became darkness.

5. Many very *weighty lessons* may be learnt in this book : for instance—See the faithfulness of God to David and his house, in continuing his seed that the Messiah might descend of him. Nay, he is faithful to his promises made to Jehu his enemy. No difficulties in the way could turn him from his word—He performs his threatenings also as punctual, in spite of all oppositions. And how severe are his judgments, where his

tender mercies have been rejected!—Learn by this history the instability of thrones and empires: see the constant revolutions of families and kingdoms.—Above all mark the destructive nature of sin, especially in Magistrates and Ministers, dividing them and their people from God first, and then bringing down judgments and ruin on kings, priests, and people together,—Israel and Judah are banished of God into heathen lands.

THE

. TWO BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

These at first formed but one book, and were probably compiled by Ezra, sometime after the captivity, and were extracted from the Scriptures then extant, and the journals kept by the Jews.—The Chronicles give one summary view of the whole history from the creation to the days of Ezra.—These books were peculiarly useful to the Jews after their return from Babylon, to ascertain their own tribes and families with regard to their settlement in Canaan.—It was necessary that the tribe of Judah should be kept distinct till the Messiah came, afterwards of no consequence.—These books are of great use to us Christians also, as they throw great light on the preceding history. Though they be for substance the same with the other four books of Kings, yet a variety of subjects are treated here more at large, and several new and interesting particulars added.—The Jews give us here the history of the kings of Judah only, beginning with David, and come down to the captivity. God will not honour Israel with any further notice; but cleaves to Judah for the sake of his Son: and when Shilo came, they also were dispersed among the nations, like Israel, whose example they had too closely followed. As the book of Deuteronomy gives the substance of the writings of Moses; so the Chronicles give one general view of the whole from the beginning to the rebuilding of the temple.

I. CHRONICLES.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE first nine chapters are taken up with a collection of *Genealogies*.—The downfall of *Saul* is related in chap. x.—All the rest of the book to the end is the history of King *David*.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

- 1—9. Collection of Genealogies.
10. The downfall of Saul.
11. David crowned : winneth Zion : his mighty men.
12. David's companions at Ziklag, and armies at Hebron.
13. David fetcheth the Ark to Obed-Edom.—Uzza smitten.
14. David's felicity in his family and subjects—two victories.
15. David brings the Ark of God to Jerusalem with great joy.
16. David's Psalm of praise : his attention to the Ark.
17. David forbidden to build the temple : his prayer.
18. David subdues Philistia, Moab, Syria, and Edom.
19. David's victories over the Ammonites and Syrians.
20. Rabbah taken ; three battles with the Philistines.
21. David numbers the people and is punished.
22. David charges Solomon to build the temple of God.
23. The Levites numbered and cleansed : their offices.
24. The priests divided by lot into 24 orders.
25. The singers and musicians divided into 24 orders.
26. The various officers appointed for the temple.
27. David's officers and counsellors in civil matters.
28. David's great concern respecting the temple displayed.
29. David adores, prays, blesses God and dies.

Observations on I. Chronicles.

1. The catalogues at the beginning of this book are collected from other scriptures. And the chief design of them appears to be, to draw down in one connected chain from Adam, a line and genealogy of Jesus Christ,

the Saviour promised to David, to Abraham, and to Adam, that when the promised Mediator should appear in the flesh, the church might infallibly know him to be the true Messiah, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the son of David.—They were also the genealogies of the people among whom the Lord continued his church from Adam, till the return from the Babylonish captivity. The line of each tribe is traced distinctly by itself, chiefly that Christ might be looked for from Judah. Also that the temple service might be performed by the Levites, and for the greater order amongst the rest of the tribes. And do not these genealogies discover also the singular accomplishment of God's promises to Abraham—in multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven?

2. The history of *King David* is given here at greater length, and his character appears to far greater advantage, than in the books of Samuel. There he was described as the greatest and best of kings: here as the most eminent in grace and holiness, "The man after God's own heart." His exalted piety and holy conduct shine here with a peculiar lustre. He no sooner is established in the throne, than he turns his main attention to the affairs of the church and sacred service of God, which he makes his grand and leading concern through life. What means that high regard which he had for the Ark of the God of Israel, and his boundless joy when it was conducted in safety to Zion? What immense pains he took in the regulations of the priests and Levites, and the sacred service of the temple, that the holy worship of Jehovah might be performed in the highest order, with reverence and solemnity. And his zeal for building a temple for his God is boundless, like a vehement flame, which many waters could not quench. All may easily discern that his whole soul flowed towards this temple, as it represented Christ his Saviour, in the vast preparations he made towards erecting this building of God, and by the solemn and earnest charges which he addressed to Solomon his son, and the elders of Israel concerning

it, just before his death.—Ezra dwells the more on David's burning zeal for God and his service, with a view to kindle a holy emulation in all around him, to restore and revive the worship of the temple to its ancient order and purity, in which his God crowned him with success. David is a pattern to all kings, and happy the kingdom that is governed by such a king.

II. CHRONICLES.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE reign of Solomon, and his building of the temple, take up the first nine chapters—Then the reigns of the kings of Judah in regular succession from Solomon down to the captivity. The book concludes with Judah's going into captivity, the destruction of Jerusalem, and burning of the temple, and the restoration just glanced at.

Contents of the Chapters.

CH. P.

- 1—9. The peaceable reign of Solomon.
- 10—12. The blemished reign of Rehoboam.
13. The short, but busy reign of Abijah.
- 14—16. The long and happy reign of Asa.
- 17—20. The pious and prosperous reign of Jehoshaphat.
- 21, 22. The infamous reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah.
23. Jehoiada makes Joash king, and restores the worship of God.
- 24, 25. The unsteady reigns of Joash and Amaziah.
26. The long and prosperous reign of Uzziah.
27. The regular reign of Jotham.
28. The profane and wicked reign of Ahaz.
- 29—32. The gracious and glorious reign of Hezekiah.
33. The wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon.
- 34, 35. The reforming reign of Josiah.
36. The ruinous reigns of his sons.

Observations on II. Chronicles.

1. This book for substance is the same with the two books of Kings; with this difference:—In the books of Kings the history of both Judah and Israel is blended and carried on together: here we have only that of the house of David, the kings of Judah: the history of the kings of Israel is wholly waved. The account given of David's family is related here to great advantage, being entire by itself, and considerably enlarged. Much is added of a religious nature, and the narrative is become more of an ecclesiastical history, especially during the best part of Solomon's reign, when he built the temple of God, and established the true worship of Jehovah in it. The whole book together evinces the faithful accomplishment of God's promises to David and his seed respecting the line of the Messiah.

2. During the reign of Solomon, the kingdom arrived at the summit of its glory. It was rising in the days of David, and in the days of his son it gained its meridian splendor. Solomon governed with unexampled wisdom. In his time, the land knew no war, but enjoyed uninterrupted peace. The kingdom prospered and flourished exceedingly whilst he wore the crown. God fixed on Solomon the wise, and man of peace, to build the holy temple, which was to be the glory of the whole earth. And this to direct the attention of all Israel to the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace; and to the spiritual temple which he was to erect, and is to stand for ever. Upon the death of Solomon, the kingdom began to decay, and the glory to depart from Israel. It was eclipsed all of a sudden, and sunk gradually into deeper darkness, till finally its sun went down in their last king; and doleful darkness ensued. The seeds of this harvest of misery were sowed in the sins of Solomon. When his infidel wives led him to the idol's temple, God threatened his house; his kingdom was divided and brought to desolation.

3. In the history of the kings that came after Solomon, we find all along, that the good kings prospered greatly,

and the kingdom flourished. But the wicked kings suffered miserably, and rendered their subjects unhappy. And when they filled up the measure of their iniquity, the whole land was ruined. We see by all this, how true the Lord is, when he saith, “ They that honour me, I will honour; but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.” What faithful warnings are here, to nations, to churches, and to families, that then alone can they expect to prosper when God is served in truth.

4. The warnings of the prophets were not attended to. Now the judgments which they had long threatened are poured down. The walls of Jerusalem are destroyed: her palaces levelled with the ground; the sacred temple burnt with fire; and Judah is gone to Babylon. What tremendous judgments are these on the seed of Abraham, the church of God! The small remnant still left in Canaan were soon carried by Johanan unto Egypt, amongst whom was Jeremiah. None ever returned to the holy land, save a few of Judah who departed from idolatry whilst in Chaldea. There is no rising from under judgments but by returning to the Lord.

E Z R A.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT is an account of the Jews returning from Babylon to Jerusalem at two different times. The first company went up in the second year of Cyrus, under the conduct of Zerubbabel, to rebuild the temple of God which lay waste. They met with great hindrances from enemies; but at last completed it with joy.—In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, another great company of the Jews went up under the conduct of Ezra, who restores the

service of God in the temple, and produces a great reformation through the land.

Zerubbabel erected the new temple.

Ezra restores the service of God in the temple.

Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem and reformed the land.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Cyrus proclaims liberty to the captives in Babylon.
2. The number of the several families that accepted freedom.
3. They arrive at Jerusalem, and begin to build the temple.
4. Ahasuerus Artaxerxes stops the building during his reign.
5. In the reign of Darius the building goes forward.
6. The temple is finished, and dedicated with solemnity.
7. Ezra comes up from Babylon to Jerusalem as a reformer.
8. Ezra's conduct when he arrives at Jerusalem.
9. Ezra works a great reformation through the land
10. The reformation continued.

Observations on Ezra.

1. When the Jews had spent seventy years in captivity, bewailing their sins and sufferings, Cyrus king of Babylon proclaimed *liberty* for all to go up to Jerusalem, and to rebuild the temple of God. Some out of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, accepted the offer; but the greatest part remained in Babylon: yet these contributed bountifully towards building of the temple. Cyrus appointed Zerubbabel, grandson of Jehoiachin king of Judah, to be governor at Jerusalem, and delivered up to him the sacred vessels of the temple. The people, to the amount of 40,360, assembled and put themselves under the conduct of Zerubbabel their governor, and Joshua their high priest, and took their journey.—When they arrived at Jerusalem, they erected an altar to the God of Israel, offered sacrifices, and resolved upon rebuilding the ruined temple. They collected their brethren scattered in the land; made a

most liberal contribution, and great preparations for the work. Early in the second year, the foundation of the temple was laid with a mixture of joy and sorrow.—The Samaritans by treachery tried to stop the building, complained to Cyrus, and the work proceeded slowly in his day; and during the reign of Ahasuerus (who probably is the same with Artaxerxes) an enemy to the Jews, they were compelled to leave off building. But when Darius came to the throne, they were encouraged by their prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to proceed boldly with the work.—Tatnai, governor of Samaria, complained of them to Darius. This king confirmed Cyrus's commission; encouraged the Jews to proceed; compelled the Samaritans to contribute; and threatened those that hindered them with the heaviest penalties. The temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius, and dedicated to God with many sacrifices: and the passover was kept with joy and triumph.

2. In the reign of Artaxerxes (who succeeded Darius, and who probably was that Ahasuerus who made Esther his queen,) *Ezra*, a most pious and learned priest, received full commission from the king to go up to Jerusalem (and to take with him all the remaining Jews that were willing to go) and to revive and establish in the temple the true worship of the God of heaven. The king, his counsellors, and others, furnished Ezra with very great treasures for this purpose. When this pious priest received this high commission, and was appointed governor in Judea, he worshipped God and gave thanks.—When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, he opens his commission, delivers the treasures to the priests, and sends the king's orders to the governors of the provinces. He now begins his great work: appoints judges in the land: gives a correct and regular copy of the sacred books of Scripture: and restores the worship of the temple to its original form and purity. He governed the Jewish church for thirteen years with honour and integrity.—So this man of God restored the ancient worship to the new temple, and

reformed the land. In the darkest periods the brightest luminaries arise : men of extraordinary piety, talents, and fidelity, like Ezra, Moses, and Elijah. But even these bright stars soon disappear from the church below. "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

3. We see the *danger* of prosperity, and the *benefit* of affliction, in the conduct of these people. In Canaan, they sinned away their high privileges, and went after idols in spite of all the prophets of God. In Babylon they repent, weep over their folly, and seek after God. And when the Lord saw their affliction, he heard their cry. Light breaks forth in obscurity ; a deliverer is raised up : liberty is proclaimed, and they return with singing unto Zion.

4. This second temple into which our Saviour came, is of all others the most lively emblem of the *Church of Christ*. The same circumstances attend the building of both the temple of Jerusalem, and the spiritual temple. The foundation of both is laid with joy and sorrow; all the godly help to build with diligence and delight ; they meet with various hindrances and formidable oppositions :—but these mountains flow down before Zerubbabel. Enemies, contrary to their nature and inclination, are constrained to lend their assistance. Infidel kings, when they know not what they are doing, form and execute plans that further the work of God. After experiencing many hard struggles and discouragements, and passing through many bright and dark seasons, "the top-stone is brought forth with shouting, Grace, grace unto it."—When the most magnificent temples are erected, they are useless until the true worship is established in them, and the presence of God enjoyed.

NEHEMIAH.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THIS is a continuation of the account begun in the book of Ezra, respecting the returned captives. Nehemiah in Babylon grieves for the desolation of Jerusalem: receives commission from king Artaxerxes to go up and rebuild it, which he accomplishes successfully in the face of all opposition. He also corrects great abuses which he finds among the people, and produces a remarkable reformation in all departments of church and state. Nehemiah is a builder and a reformer.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Nehemiah's deep concern for the affliction of Jerusalem.
2. Nehemiah commissioned to build the walls of Jerusalem.
3. The names and orders of those who built the walls.
4. Sanballat's opposition to the builders, who still proceed.
5. Nehemiah redresses the grievances of the oppressed poor.
6. In spite of Sanballat's plot, the walls are finished.
7. A register of those who came first from Babylon.
8. Ezra expounding the law, the people deeply affected.
9. The Levites speak of God's goodness, and the sins of Judah.
10. The names of those who sealed the covenant.
11. The rulers and others brought to reside at Jerusalem.
12. Several particulars respecting the priests and Levites.
13. Nehemiah reforms great and various abuses.

Observations on Nehemiah.

1. Nehemiah was a cup-bearer to Artaxerxes king of Babylon; a young man of extraordinary piety and erudition. He is deeply affected at the ruinous state of Jerusalem. When the king was made acquainted

with the cause of his dejection, he commissions him to go up and build the ruined city, and sends orders by him to the governors of the provinces to furnish him with materials. When he comes to Jerusalem, he surveys the ruins, calls the elders together, delivers his commission, and sets the people to work in regular order. Sanballat governor of Samaria, with other enemies, violently oppose them; Nehemiah arms the builders, and encourages them to trust in God; the walls, with part of the city are soon erected. Nehemiah is now governor in Jerusalem, though Ezra is still living. Like a man of God, he zealously begins a great reformation both in church and state. He sharply rebukes the rich for oppressing the poor, whose grievances he redresses. He takes care for Jerusalem's security: advances God's religion and worship, and engages the people in a most solemn covenant with God, which is signed by the princes, priests, and Levites. He disposes of the inhabitants by lot: dedicates the walls of Jerusalem, and appoints the offices of the priests and Levites in the temple. And this being done, he returns to Babylon according to promise.—Ezra greatly assisted in this reformation, especially in religious matters. He reads the law of God publicly, and expounds it to the people: sets forth correct copies of the whole Scripture, and enjoins the people to observe it, and brings them to spend their high festivals most religiously, in searching the Scriptures, and confessing their sins.—Nehemiah, on his return again to Jerusalem, proceeds with his reformation. He cleanses the temple, causes the Sabbath to be observed, makes provision for the priests, and prevents marriages with strangers. So greatly did he reform and benefit the Jews. It is probable that the prophet Malachi lived in his day. This is the last account we have of the Jews until the day of Christ. And this brings their history down to about 110 years after the captivity.

2. From this narrative we see how deep and desperate the *distresses of the Church* may be suffered to grow before the Lord comes to restore her. But unexpectedly,

and against all appearances, deliverance comes. He raises up instruments, qualifies them for the work, goes himself with them, and they succeed : all difficulties are surmounted, and Jerusalem rises out of ruins.

3. What a prodigious, difficult, and slow work is the *reformation of a Church or kingdom* sunk in sin ! What strong opposition such a work is sure to meet with. Wicked men in power, and enemies under the mask of friendship, are the most formidable instruments and choice agents of Satan, to oppose the progress of religion. These will try to binder the building of God, by treachery, by ridicule, and at last by force. But no weapon formed against the Almighty shall prosper. Jerusalem is built, the people reformed, Sanballat is disgraced, and Nehemiah triumphs. How easily and wonderfully God can bring reformation to perfection against all impediments, when he is resolved to carry it on. One Nehemiah in his hand shall reform a nation.

What a remarkable character is Nehemiah ! and what a striking *type of Christ* ! How deeply is he affected with the miseries of others, when happy himself in the king's palace. With what joy does he undertake the most arduous work for their benefit ! and with what extreme prudence and undaunted courage does he conduct his vast undertakings ! His work was great, and his whole heart was in it. He was zealous, laborious, and persevering. When subtle enemies artfully strove to divert him from his work, he answers, " I am about a great work, and I cannot come down ; " and when they plot for his life, he cries, " Should such a man as I flee ? " He would go on with the work of the Lord, regardless of all dangers ; often lifting up his soul in pious and fervent ejaculations, for which he is remarkable. the Lord was with him, and made him to prosper. " And the Lord will be with you whilst ye are with him."—The walls of Jerusalem are an emblem of the walls of salvation that surround the new Jerusalem, whose builder and maker is God the Saviour. Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah are bright stars that guide us to Bethlehem.

5. Happy the church and kingdom that are governed by such men as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Pious and faithful priests and magistrates are excellent instruments to build the church and reform the land. Nehemiah is a pattern to all reformers. He is so disinterested, that he will accept of no emoluments: so liberal as to maintain a great number of the builders at his own expense: and so impartial in the administration of justice, that the rich shall not oppress the poor. His zeal for religion was truly eminent. He causeth the laws of God to be publicly proclaimed; the Sabbath to be kept holy; the sacrifices to be duly offered; and the priests properly maintained. He corrects all public abuses, and works a great reformation in the land. Pray God to bless all lands with such governors, and praise him when he sends such men to rule.

ESTHER.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT is a narrative of a most singular deliverance of the Jews from the brink of universal destruction.—Esther is made Queen, and Mordecai a favourite at court.—Proud Haman plots the destruction of all the Jews, and artfully obtains their death warrant to be sealed with the king's ring.—Esther, Mordecai, and all the Jews are overwhelmed with grief and consternation.—Haman's particular plot against Mordecai's life falls on himself; and his general plan to ruin the Jews is also defeated.—The Jews ordain a feast called Purim, to perpetuate their deliverance through all generations.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Ahasuerus divorces Vashti the queen.
2. Esther is made queen.—Plot against the king discovered.
3. Haman's plot to destroy all the Jews.
4. Mordecai and Esther use means to deliver the Jews.
5. Esther's two banquets.—Haman erects a gallows.
6. The king's sleepless night ; and Haman's mortification.
7. Esther petitions for the Jews.—Haman is hanged.
8. Mordecai is exalted, and the Jews delivered.
9. The Jews slay their enemies, and make a feast.
10. The greatness of Ahasuerus, and Mordecai's usefulness.

Observations on Esther.

In this very interesting narrative, the doctrine of God's *prudence* is taught us in the most striking and convincing manner. What singular deliverance of the church ! what signal vengeance on her enemies, does this book record.

1. Behold, how vigilantly God in his providence always watches over his *church* in her greatest straits and deepest dangers ; and works deliverance at a time and in a way that we look not for, to make us acknowledge that it is his hand.—Mark the mysterious steps in this deliverance of the Church in Chaldea. God saw the storm before it gathered, and prepared means to disperse it, before the plot was formed in Haman's mind. A secret train is laid by Haman to destroy : a more secret train is laid by Jehovah to deliver. The chain is long, and yet not a link to spare. God fixes on Mordecai and Esther to be his instruments : he endues them with wisdom, piety, zeal, and fortitude, to qualify them for their work ; and places them in situations of influence, where they may act with effect.—It is ordained, that Ahasuerus shall put away Vashti his queen, to make way for another. Esther shall be a friendless orphan that her kinsman Mordecai may bring her up, and be the means of introducing her to the king's notice. She is endued with extraordinary beauty, that the king may prefer her before all others. When

a plot is formed against the king's life, Mordecai shall discover it, and inform the king in time; who for the present shall neglect to reward him, that it may be done in the storm that is coming on. When this storm is just ready to burst, that very night the king cannot sleep; but goes and reads in the records of his kingdom, of his own deliverance; and finding that his deliverer had been neglected, is now determined to do Mordecai some great honours. At the moment that these thoughts were passing through the king's mind, Haman entered, and was instantly compelled to exalt Mordecai, whom he designed to hang that very day: and thus began to fall before him. Now Esther reminded the king, that this wicked Haman had plotted against her life also, which so enraged the king, that he ordered him for execution. Thus fell Haman, and the church of God was delivered.—Here is a wheel within a wheel, and no part of God's plan is understood, till the day the church is rescued from her imminent danger; then all is clear. Give God credit, when you know not what he is doing, and believe that he will deliver his people from all their troubles. The day in which the Jews looked for universal destruction, was spent in conquests, mirth, and festivity. One poor Mordecai, when God employs him, is enough to save a whole nation from the brink of ruin.

2. The providence of God in a way of judgment on the wicked, is strikingly displayed in the *fall and ruin of Haman*. This story affords us the fairest opportunity of seeing the extreme fury and subtlety of the Devil and his instruments against the people of God: and also the folly and danger of trying to destroy those whom God determines to save.—This Haman was a man of the most detestable tempers: proud, malicious, and revengeful. Though exalted to the highest honours, yet unhappy, whilst Mordecai would not do him servile obeisance. "All this availeth me nothing," whilst Mordecai refuseth to stoop to me. What a trifling incident mars all worldly greatness! He swells with pride and burns with vengeance, and determines to

slaughter all the Jews, because one of them refused to make him a bow. Pride is an infernal fire, and malignant revenge knows no bounds.—Through falsehood and treachery Haman obtains commission from his Prince to carry on his bloody and diabolical purposes. The decree is past: the death warrant is sealed: the day is fixed upon: and Haman is merry at his feast.—But the cries of the afflicted seed of Abraham are heard in heaven; and Haman's day is come, when his pride shall meet with due reward. He contends with God, and must come down: and none falls so low as those that are most exalted in pride. He is compelled (with a reluctant heart overwhelmed in confusion) to proclaim the honours of Mordecai, the very man he meant to hang. He loses the king's favour, and becomes the object of his vengeance: is stripped of all his dignity: sinks in disgrace: and is hanged on the very gallows which his malice had erected for a man of God. His estates are confiscated; his honour and dignity transferred to the man he hated above all others; his ten sons are slain, and his memory rendered detestable to all generations.—How true it is “that the triumph of the wicked is short, and that pride and haughtiness go before a fall!” In the net which Haman had laid for others, is his own foot taken: he is snared in the works of his own hands, and lies down in sorrow. Such will ever be the lot of the wicked when he plotteth against the just; his day is coming.—If the name of God is not in this book, his finger is clearly seen in it. The proud enemies of God and his people have a solemn warning in the fall and ruin of Haman. And the faithful servants of God have here the strongest encouragement to trust him in the darkest hour. Though the Lord sometimes comes late, he always comes in time; whom He saves none can destroy, and whom He destroys none can deliver.

DOCTRINAL BOOKS.

Having done with the historical books, we now come to those that are called ***Doctrinal***. All the books between the history and the prophets, that is, from Esther to Isaiah, are more purely religious, and declare to us the will of God in a more Doctrinal way, and were called by the ancients *Holy Writings*. Job is doctrinal, the Psalms devotional, the Proverbs practical, the Ecclesiastes penitential, the Canticles experimental. These five books should be studied with more close attention than any other, being of a more spiritual kind, and containing much more matter. They are more difficult to be thoroughly understood, yet more necessary to be known than the historical writings.

J O B.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

WE have here Job's *prosperity, adversity, recovery,* and his singular deportment under them all. First, his great *prosperity*. He was most eminent in piety; very rich, and happy in his family.—Secondly his great *adversity*. Satan envied his happiness: accuseth his religion to God as mercenary: obtains commission to try and tempt him: to afflict him in his property, family, soul and body, till reduced to the deepest distress: that so Job's uprightness might be cleared, his graces proved, Satan confuted, and God in all magnified.—Three of his former pious friends come to visit him in his unparalleled afflictions. They weep over him, and sit by him on the ground in silent sorrow for seven

days. Chap. i. ii.—Job, having experienced God's love and favour in Christ, is amazed at God's severity towards him, bursts into intemperate complaints to God, justifying himself. He vents his grief, bewails his condition, laments his birth, and longs for the grave. Chap. iii.—Job's three friends endeavour to convince him that he is a wicked man, or an hypocrite, pleading that God's judgments are more severely upon him, than usually upon the faithful. Therefore they advise him to humble himself and repent, that good may come unto him. They have a bad cause, which they manage well.—Job replies to them, and maintains that severe afflictions do not prove a man to be wicked or an hypocrite, and refused to condemn himself against his conscience; he confesses that as a creature and a sinner he dares not contest with God, yet doubts not of being acquitted as a believer in Christ. Job has a good cause and manages it badly. These warm debates continue for many days: great truths are delivered, and lamentable infirmities discovered on both sides. Job at length puts his friends to silence. Chap. iv—xxxii.—Young Elihu sat by with silent modesty during these intemperate debates. At last his fire kindles, and with great solemnity he vents the strong feelings of his mind. First, he reproves the three friends for taking wrong ground against Job. Then he blames Job for his eagerness to justify himself, and for his irreverent conduct towards God. Chap. xxxii—xxxvii.—Thirdly, God out of the whirlwind addressed Job. He manifests to him his incomprehensible majesty and glory, till Job is humbled for his presumption. God acquits him of the charge of hypocrisy, and so condemns his friends, and bids Job to intercede for them. Chap. xxxviii—xli.—Lastly, Job submits himself, recovers, and rises to double prosperity, honour, and happiness. Chap. xlvi. He is supposed to have lived between the death of Joseph and the death of Moses.

Observations on Job.

1. It is clear that the *spirits* of another world have intercourse with the inhabitants of earth : both holy and fallen spirits have commerce with mankind. Holy angels minister to the heirs of salvation, and do them every kind office that God appoints. One day when these sons of God presented themselves before him for new commission to serve him, Satan also came for permission to do mischief. His chief enmity is against God, who is out of his reach, therefore he tries to wound him in those that are nearest him. Holy Job is now his mark. He accuseth him to God ; tempts him, torments and strives to destroy him. He goes as far as God suffers him, and can go no farther. His power is limited, but his malice boundless.

2. It is clear that the best servants of God may have manifold, deep, and long *afflictions*, not so much to punish as to purify them, and for the trial of their faith. It is ordained by heaven's decree, that the heirs of glory shall travel home through tribulation. Let the saints be reconciled to their lot ; for there is no reversing the counsels of God, nor can his plan be better. The trials and sorrows of life answer the most salutary purposes. By these we are made in the likeness of Christ's death, and learn that the grace of God is sufficient for us. And to be delivered from deep distress, will swell the eternal song. The ungodly may have prosperity, ease, and mirth, but they soon shall lie down in sorrow. The godly shall be scourged ; and the highest in grace may be the deepest in tribulation. Who like Job in piety or in pain ?

3. Ye have heard of the *patience* of Job. His trials were prodigious in number, nature, and weight. Tremendous waves rolled over him. He is hurled at once, as by a whirlwind, from the pinnacle of honour to the dunghill, and from the height of prosperity to the depth of adversity. His trials are recorded : what can be added to them ! and he has no friend to comfort

him. The whole world to him is thick darkness without a ray of light ; yet under all this Job sinned not.—Learn here the uncertainty of every comfort under the sun, and see the blessedness of true religion, which alone can bear up the soul in deep adversities. See also that God does baffle Satan on his own ground. Satan said that Job served God for his prosperity : Job is now reduced, yet serves his God, and Satan proved a liar.

4. From the conduct of Job's *friends and relations* learn, that it is most unwarrantable and injurious to charge God's servants with wickedness and hypocrisy, because they are brought to deep distress and long affliction. Learn of Job, that true faith in Christ, and having a conscience void of offence, with integrity of heart, are the sweetest cordials in a day of trial. And we see in Job's case, that extreme distress may draw forth some extravagant passions and rash expressions, from the best of Christians, which call for humiliation ; yet this does not prove that they have no grace, or that God's love is withdrawn, though it calls aloud for repentance. And who does not see in the restoration of Job, that when patience hath had its perfect work, and God hath honoured his own name in the sufferings of his people, how easily he can deliver them out of all their troubles, and crown them with double prosperity ?

5. In the *debates* between Job and his three friends, we see what angry religious controversies are in general. The contending parties strove for victory more than truth ; and, where they cannot prove their points, they give abundant proofs of their own corruptions, and are as positive on the side of error as on the side of truth. They call forth the worst tempers of the human heart : and by striving for victory over each other, they give Satan full victory over them all. Far from being of one mind at first, farther as they proceed, and farthest of all where they leave off. Yet sometimes great truths are delivered by men in bad humour, which may be useful to others who read for information.

6. One of the main ends of the book of Job is to

give a glorious display of the *attributes of Jehovah*. These are set forth in a masterly style by Job's friends ; described more excellent yet by holy Job ; and more exalted still by Elihu ; but most sublime of all by Jehovah himself, out of the whirlwind.—What great, what glorious things are spoken of his wisdom and goodness, justice, and mercy : of his majesty, humility, and glory ! Yet after all this is said of the great God and his marvellous works, how little is God known by the wisest of his creatures ! Let him be our constant study, and eternal delight.

7. It should appear that the whole history of Job is designed to direct our hearts and minds to the suffering reigning *Saviour*, whom Job resembles almost in every circumstance. Job was rich, became poor, and rose to glory. Satan envied, hated, and tempted none like Job. Whose character was more mistaken ? who so afflicted and forsaken, so reviled and persecuted ? He was rejected of men, and forsaken of God in his deepest darkness and bitterest trials. Yet when the conflict is ended, he bursts his bands, leaves the regions of misery, mounts the hill of triumph, and his light, joy, and prosperity, break forth as the morning. Through all this, let us look to Jesus in all his conflicts, victories, and glory.

THE PSALMS.

Observations on the Psalms.

AS Paradise was the world in miniature, so is the book of Psalms an epitome of the whole Bible, containing the substance of all Scriptures within a small compass, and more entirely spiritual than any other book. As the sun outshines the stars, so does the book

of Psalms all other books of the Old Testament. It is beyond all praise.

1. We should first of all clearly understand, that God gave us the book of Psalms for the highest and best of all purposes ; *to promote and enliven the devotion of his Church in all ages, to the end of time.* And it is admirably well calculated to answer that important end, to illuminate the mind, to bring to our view the grand mysteries of the kingdom of grace, and to open before us glorious prospects stretching forward to the everlasting hills. How well suited are the Psalms to affect the heart ; to call forth the powers of the soul into holy exercise ; to make our affections burn with sacred fire ; and to raise our spirits to heavenly things ! The grand subjects of this book are designed to furnish all believers with matter for holy meditations, prayers, and praise ; to inspire our hearts, and tune our spirits, in the service and worship of the God of salvation, which ought to be done with fervour of affections flowing from grateful hearts.

2. It is therefore evident, that this book throughout contains *subjects far more sublime, spiritual, and interesting,* than merely the history of David, and the affairs of his kingdom. We cannot for a moment suppose that the trials and triumphs, the joys and sorrows, the afflictions and victories of the son of Jesse are the subjects which the God of salvation has appointed to promote devotion in all his temples to the end of the world. Is it at all likely that the opposition and persecution which David met with at the hands of Saul, in his way to the throne ; or the sorrows which Absalom occasioned afterwards ; or the victories which David obtained over Moab, Edom and Philistia, are to form the songs of Zion in all ages ? All these things must be understood as spoken chiefly of Jesus, or our devotion must be dull and dead. Nay, it would be absurd to think that the affairs of any one man, however eminent, should be ordained of God, as the subject matter of the prayers and praises of all the redeemed in all lands till time shall be no more.

3. The book of Psalms doubtless sets forth the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the affairs of his kingdom of grace. Indeed all the books of the Old Testament point to Jesus in one way or another : for the whole Bible is one connected scheme ; the salvation of men by Jesus Christ is the soul and substance of this scheme. The laws of Moses, the government of kings, the practical books, and the writings of the prophets, all point to Jesus in one form or another, according to the nature of the subject.—But this book of Psalms leads us directly to the sanctuary. It is a summary of all the other books : it is the marrow of the whole. Its main design is to set forth the Saviour of the world, and to direct our eyes and hearts to the true David, the king of Zion : the God of Israel. In this bright mirror we behold the glory of his person, kingdom and priesthood ; we see his humiliation, conflicts, sorrows. The oppositions, persecutions, and contempt which he endured ; and the glorious victories which he obtained, are here set before us. In short, the book of Psalms describes him all the way, descending from glory to earth, redeeming the world, and returning to glory again. In general, whatever we read here of David is to be understood as spoken of Christ, and true of David as a type of Christ. This view will put life into the Psalms, and stamp peculiar glory on them all.

4. The book of Psalms describes not only Christ himself, but also his *kingdom*, under the name of the kingdom of David. It is a clear and perfect mirror, wherein the church may view herself, in all the different states, circumstances and conditions she passes through on her journey heavenward. Here then we behold the church of Christ in prosperity and adversity, in light and darkness, in joys and sorrows, in trials and in triumphs by turns. At one time we see her declining, sinking in sin, and carried into captivity : then reviving again, and returning with singing unto Zion. At times we view her struggling with temptations, afflictions, and trouble ; at other times rising above oppressions, and triumphing in her God. To-day in sorrow,

weeping in the dust ; to-morrow happy, and singing on the mount of joy. The book of Psalms furnishes us with a full view of the Lamb's wife, through all the heavenly road : and with all she meets with during her pilgrimage through the wilderness, till she arrives at the mount of God in the holy land. Here, her beauty, riches, honours ; her conquests, joy, and safety, are all correctly described. ‘ And what solemn warnings and denunciations of vengeance against oppressors and persecutors, despisers and opposers of Christ and his church, are every where interspersed throughout the Psalms.’ The whole book is chiefly a description of Christ and his kingdom. And so closely united is Jesus and his church, that in some places it is difficult to say which of the two is spoken of.

5. The books of Scripture have a *double sense*, the literal and the spiritual : this cannot be said of any other book in the world : human writings have only a natural, but the Bible has a spiritual sense also, which proves it to be the book of God.—It hath pleased the Lord to borrow human affairs to convey through them his glorious truths respecting Christ and his kingdom. What God saith is strictly true, both in the natural and spiritual sense. At times, we, through blindness, can discern only the natural ; and here we should check vain conjectures. At other times, the spiritual almost alone appears ; and sometimes both are discerned with equal clearness ; as in the case of David mounting the throne in spite of all opposition, where Christ and David are seen with one view.—Upon this plan, then, are we to interpret the Psalms, as having a double meaning. What is said to David, as King of Israel, is said to Jesus, as King of Saints : and what is said of the affairs of David's kingdom, are to be understood of the church of Christ, and that in their first and highest import ; and true of David and of Israel, only in an inferior sense, and used as a channel to convey the spiritual meaning. In order to see this, take the following instances.

In many Psalms David complains of the malice, fury,

and persecutions of his enemies ; of the troubles that filled his life with bitterness, and his heart with sorrow ; yet saith that his heart clave stedfastly to God and his law, and found support and comfort. This is far more applicable to Christ than to David.—In other Psalms, David speaks of his deliverances and *exaltation*. That he, as God's anointed, is elevated to the throne, and rules over the nations ; plans the temple ; sets the worship of God in perfect order and beauty ; and makes Jerusalem to become a praise in the earth. Is it possible to ascribe all this to David more than to Christ ?—And the Psalms which are *penitential*, where David mourns over his sin and folly, may as properly be the language of Christ our surety, when "made sin for us," as we can say, "the Lord our righteousness." And those which call for *judgments on enemies*, are not prayers but prophecies : not so much the language of David as of Christ, foretelling the lot of the ungodly.

Also, the Psalms applied to Israel, are in the higher sense to be understood of the *spiritual Israel*. We sing not so much of what befel them literally, as of what befalls us spiritually, during our journey to the heavenly land. We are in a far higher sense than they delivered from bondage and slavery ; we go through the sea, and travel in the wilderness. We have spiritually, God's pillar, tabernacle, and mount : we have bread from heaven, water from the rock, healing from one lifted up, and prospect of a land of rest. We have enemies, difficulties and dangers, captivities and deliverances. So the things attending our journey to the Holy Land are the subjects of our songs. All things contained in the Psalms respecting the priesthood of Aaron and the temple service, must be understood of Christ. In like manner are we to understand the figures borrowed from the natural world. We read here of creation ; heaven, earth, and sea ; of sun, moon, and stars ; of air, thunder, dew, and rain ; of light and darkness, summer and winter. All such things are figures of higher things in the new creation, the world of grace. In short, whatever be the figures used in the

Psalms, whether David, Israel, the ceremonial law, or any thing in creation, or in the history of man, they are shadows of far higher and better things in Christ's kingdom. (See Bishop Horne on the Psalms.)

6. This is a book of *Christian experience*. It should be the believer's delight and daily study. There are few things in true religion, doctrinal, practical, or experimental, but may be found here. It is of singular use to all who travel heavenward, for direction, caution, and encouragement. Here we learn what the true disciples of Christ are, and what they aspire after; what they have to expect from the world and from God; and what they shall find in themselves and in Christ. We are here constantly reminded of what we must have to struggle with from within and from without, and how to succeed in the conflict. Abundant instructions are given to encourage faith and hope, to direct our tempers and conduct, to enliven our devotion, and to assist self-examination. And hardly any occasion for prayer or praise can be conceived, but the most suitable materials may be found here. All that God is toward man, all that man ought to be towards God, may be learnt in the book of Psalms.—It is a divine standard, of genuine experience, by which we may always know what we really are, and judge how far our aims and desires, our hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, are spiritual or carnal. We here listen to the language of a gracious soul in all his trials and triumphs; when mourning for sin, or thirsting after God; when burdened with guilt, or singing of deliverance; when struggling with temptations, or exulting in victory; when weeping in darkness or rejoicing in light. It is hardly possible for the Christian to be in any condition or frame of mind, but he will find something here to correspond with his own case. As a book of experience, the Psalms are of inestimable value, and our delight in them will grow with our experience of the power of true religion in our own hearts.

P R O V E R B S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT may be divided into five parts—First, The preface, which is an animated exhortation to study and practise the rules and ways of wisdom, with cautions to guard against all hindrances thereto. Chap. i—ix. The second part contains what are properly called “the Proverbs.” Chap. x—xxii. The third part is a new exhortation which Solomon gives to his son or scholar. Ch. xxiii, xxiv. The fourth part consists of Proverbs, collected by the men of Hezekiah, such as Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah. Chap. xxv.—xxix. The fifth part contains the two last chapters: the one being the proverbial prophecy of Agur; and the last, the proverbial instructions given by Bathsheba to her son Solomon, in his younger years, who is here called Lemuel.

Observations on Proverbs.

1. The Lord Jehovah employed Solomon as the penman of three books. It is thought that he penned the Song of Canticles when young; the Proverbs in more mature years; and the Ecclesiastes near the close of life; and that it is the language of repentance after he returned unto God, under a full conviction that all besides were vanity and vexation of spirit.

2. All possible attention is due to the instructions given us in the Proverbs: it is *wisdom itself* that speaketh; the wisdom of God, even Christ, “who is made of God unto us wisdom.” It is in and through Jesus Christ alone, that God communicates all divine light and knowledge to man on earth. It is the wisdom of God in Christ that speaks to us here all along.

Keep this in mind, it will put life into the whole book, and add weight and beauty to every sentence. We have here a rich variety of lessons; the most weighty instructions, and precious truths; enough to guide unto all wisdom, to enrich the soul, and to make it happy for ever.

3. The *disposition of the teacher* is the most pleasing and engaging possible. What sweet humility, what deep concern, and what warm affections does he discover all the way through! He saith to you, " My son, attend to my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding." " Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding." Jesus, the wisdom of God, is most anxious that you should listen to him, and cries " My son, attend to my words, incline thine ear to my sayings, let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart." He most affectionately exhorts you to labour hard to learn wisdom's ways, to search for her as for hid treasure, and to covet her more than gold: and great pains must be taken, or we shall perish in our folly. Jesus, to allure you to trade with wisdom, promiseth every possible gain, such as, true and durable riches, safety, honours, pleasures, beauty, and life eternal. These are the gifts of wisdom. And how tremendous are his threatenings against all that are deaf to her voice: read chap. i. 24—32. We may well say, " Happy the man that findeth wisdom."

4. Wisdom's *manner of teaching* is the most advantageous that can be adopted; by proverbial sentences. It hath pleased God to use great variety of methods to instruct us in the knowledge of his will, and left no means untried to make us wise, which will leave us for ever inexcusable if we perish in ignorance and folly. He has revealed his eternal mind to man, by history, by prophecy, by signs and ceremonies, by doctrinal and devotional writings, and biography. Here he adopts quite a new method of teaching; by *Proverbs*: and a most happy method it is. We have much instruction

in a few words. This sententious manner of speaking has every advantage. Short striking maxims arrest the attention, please the fancy, impress the mind, and dwell on the memory. Proverbial sayings have, in all ages, carried great authority over men's minds, and influenced their conduct. Some nations have valued themselves on having the wisest proverbs. None ever equalled these of Solomon, which are not only the most ancient, but flow down from the wisdom of Jehovah. They descend from heaven for the instruction of a world in the highest knowledge, and are designed to guide man to endless felicity.

5. The Proverbs are a *string of Pearls*, or a cabinet of jewels, collected together; but stand unconnected with each other. Most of the Proverbs consist of two sentences: the second sometimes explains the first; at times confirms it; and very often is set in opposition to it, by way of contrast. Virtue is set against vice, and truth is opposed to error. And thus the beauty and worth of what is good and excellent, shines the brighter by placing deformity at its side. Likewise, vice, when placed at the side of virtue, appears more detestable. And by comparing wisdom with folly, truth with error, and virtue with vice, the difference is made more striking and impressive. For instance, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

6. The main design of the Proverbs is to direct the christian *how to live*, so as to please God, do good, and be happy. As we have no book so useful to us in our devotions as the Psalms of David, so we have no book so serviceable to direct our conduct as the Proverbs of Solomon. The Psalms raise the soul to God; the Proverbs teach us how to walk with God. As we have various duties to perform, numerous evils to resist, temptations and difficulties to encounter; so the Proverbs vary and meet us at every turn, and direct us on all occasions. They expose every vice, commend every virtue, and set before us rules to guide us in every relation and condition. What blessed instructions,

what strong allurements to walk in wisdom's ways, and to depart from the ways of folly ; to forsake all evil, and to live as becometh saints. We are sent first to wisdom's school to learn her ways, then commanded to practise what we learn. It would be very useful to commit a few of these divine proverbs to memory every day, till the whole are learnt. And I cannot conceive how a parent could be better employed, than in teaching them to his children, and impressing them on their minds in their tender years. This, with God's blessing, would deliver them from much sin and misery, and render them useful in their day and generation, and prepare them for glory hereafter.

ECCLESIASTES.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE first six chapters are taken up principally in showing where happiness *cannot* be found.—The last six chapters are chiefly employed in teaching us *where we may* find true happiness here and for ever.—Many excellent instructions are here given how to use the comforts of this life, and live to God and be happy.

Observations on Ecclesiastes.

1. It is probable that this was written by Solomon in his extreme old age, and may be called his *Penitential Sermon*, which is handed down for the instruction of all generations. The doctrine is an enquiry after the chief good, or what can make man unhappy. It is first clearly proved that true and lasting fruition can never be found in the enjoyment of any created good. Nothing short of God can satisfy the soul ; all things

else die away ; therefore, can never be the source of true felicity. All things under the sun are in their nature vanity, and to us vexation of spirit : what folly then to set our hearts on things that soon disappear, and must disappoint us. The possession and enjoyment of all sublunary excellencies are only imaginary felicities : this should teach us to moderate our desires after them, and grieve but little at the loss of them. That full and durable enjoyment which every one seeks for somewhere, is to be found in God alone. Believe this, and act upon it. Leave all things, return to God, live upon him, and to his glory, and all happiness is secured for ever.

2. Solomon is an *experimental preacher*, he teaches what he himself had tried. He saw the children of men pursuing a vast variety of ways, and all in quest of happiness. In order to ascertain whether any of the ways and things they pursued would answer the end, he made a fair trial of them himself, that he might know what was the utmost enjoyment that could be found in any of them. He tried all things under the sun : wealth and power, and pleasures of all sorts : he tried all kinds of studies that the endless variety of creation would furnish him with : he tried wisdom and folly, laughter and sorrow, labour and sloth, and left nothing untried which men pursue on the earth. He made the fairest and fullest trial of all he took in hand. And the man never lived that was better qualified to form a right judgment of what he examined, as he had the highest wisdom, and the world at command. Now hear the conclusion—Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

3. Solomon is a *penitent preacher*. He deeply bewails his guilt, folly, and madness, in seeking happiness anywhere but in his God. This sermon is the voice of sorrow, wrote in tears, full of self-condemnation. It is a loud warning voice to a deaf and mistaken world. The preacher cries ! What fatal delusion for a soul capable of such high and endless felicity in his God, to seek his chief joy in things far below itself in

excellence. It is the depth of folly to seek for happiness in the best things under the sun, instead of in the living God : this is leaving the fountain of all goodness for broken cisterns. But to seek for happiness in sin is more than madness : it is seeking heaven in hell. Is it not high time that we, like Solomon, return to God, with weeping, shame, and sorrow ? What can we reasonably expect in the ways of sin and the world, but vanity, which must terminate in vexation of spirit ?

4. Solomon is a *faithful preacher*. He gives a most solemn warning to a careless world, to shun the rocks that proved so fatal to himself. This sermon is a voice from the temple, crying to the children of men, ‘ Beware, never seek to be independent of God ; but live on him alone : go not to the creature for happiness ; for it is not there. Never dream of satisfaction in the most pleasurable paths of sin, for they will soon terminate in bitter sorrow and vexation of spirit.’ Such is the warning from the temple. The preacher has a most numerous audience, but for the most part are mere hearers, that give him very little credit. Who have believed his report, and are convinced that all things short of God are vanity ? Do not all the children of men to this day, with very few exceptions, pursue the world with greediness, in quest of happiness, in the very paths where Solomon found nothing but disappointment and sorrow ? Having no faith in his testimony, they will make the trial themselves, in hopes of better success ; but in the end they will confess that Solomon is true, when they come to reap the fruit of their own folly : for “ they that sow to the wind, shall reap the whirlwind.”

5. Solomon is a *wise preacher*. He found out what is the chief good, and wherein man’s happiness consists. “ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter ; fear God and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man.” The whole of man’s concerns on earth are here brought within a small compass. Not only the whole of his duty, but also the whole of his interest, honour, and felicity consist in obeying God from a right

principle. We have therefore but one question to ask upon all occasions, whilst we are on the earth, and that is—Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do? or, What is the will of God? And when we obey him from the heart, we are happy.

CANTICLES.

THE whole of this book is an allegorical song, in the form of a dialogue, between four different parties: viz.—1. The *Bridegroom*, which is Christ. 2. The bridegroom's *friends*, the angels, prophets, apostles, and ministers. 3. The *Bride*, the true and spiritual church of Christ. 4. The bride's *companions*, (her damsels, the daughters of Jerusalem,) all that follow the church, or seek to be in it. All four bear a part, and it is not always quite clear who speaks; but for the most part, the dialogue is between Christ and his church. He calls her, "My love;" and she calls him, "My beloved."

Observations on Canticles.

1. Some have compared the three books of Solomon to the temple which he built. The proverbs to the porch; the Ecclesiastes to the sanctuary; and this song to the Holy of Holies. This book does not handle a common subject; but the most sublime, spiritual, and heavenly, ever heard of in our world. It treats of the mutual love, union, and communion, which are between Christ and his church, under the metaphor of lovers, faithfully engaged to each other, and intending marriage.

2. We have here a lively representation of the *spiritual state of Christ's Spouse* in this world, of all the different frames and conditions she passes through. Sometimes we find her all alive, and full of love: then

falling into carnal security, or weeping under spiritual deserts: now conflicting with sharp temptations; again triumphing in Christ: at times declining and withering away; again reviving, longing and seeking after her beloved. The church can be in no frame or condition, but what is here described, which ought greatly to endear this book to every believer's heart. Her blackness and infirmities are not concealed: her beauty and glory, derived from Christ, are admirably displayed. Herein, also, we have the clearest and sweetest views of the transcendent glories and excellencies of *Christ's* person; the incomparable amiableness of his dispositions; his inexpressible love, care, and concern for his church; and the nearness of access he indulges her with. So that of all pieces ever penned, this excels in sublimity and attraction: enough is here to fill the soul with ecstasy of love and delight in Jesus.

3. The ground-work of the whole song is the *marriage* of Christ and his Church. That they do stand in this endearing relation to each other, is clear from the Lord's own declaration, who saith to his church, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." "I am married unto you." "The Lord is thy husband." And hence the church is called the Lamb's wife, spouse, love, and one with himself. This spiritual, mysterious, and endearing relation is peculiarly dwelt upon in this song, and made the subject matter of it from beginning to end. This spiritual union with Jesus is the source of ALL blessings to the church in this world, and in the world to come. When Christ is ours, all is ours. Let us always recollect our marriage union with the son of God, and act agreeably to our high relation.

4. The *mutual love* of Christ and his church in this union, is admirably described in this song throughout. Only observe their strong attraction towards each other, and the torrents of spiritual love that are ever streaming out betwixt them, and your soul must be highly delighted and overpowered with the view.—Observe the *love of Christ* to his church. Seeing her looking at him

through faith, resting upon him, loving and serving him, fills his soul with such delight, that he exclaims, "Thou hast ravished (or carried away) my heart, my sister, my spouse, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointment (or graces) than all spices? Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." The heart of Jesus overflows with love towards those who feed on his fulness and live to his glory. Now turn and view the *love of the church* to Christ. In what strong terms does she express the fervour of her affections towards her beloved. "O my Beloved, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. The upright love thee; and their love is strong as death, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we shall understand this subject.

5. Great part of this divine song is employed by Christ and his church in setting forth the *comeliness, beauty, and loveliness* which they behold and admire in each other. In chap. iv. and vi. Jesus borrows the most beautiful images from all nature, to set forth the *glory of his church* when adorned with grace. He, in rapture, cries, "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights: thou lookest forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirza, thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." In chap. v. the church sets forth the transcending *glory of Christ*. She describes the graces of her beloved with extreme delight, and saith, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." And concludes with triumphing in her relation to him. "This is my Beloved, and this is my friend."

6. Who can read this song without admiring the unutterable *delights* which Christ and his church take

in each other, and the pleasures they enjoy in holding communion together ! What high delight *Christ* takes in walking in his garden, in gathering lilies, in eating the pleasant fruits, in smelling the sweet spices ! that is, in all the graces of his people, when they flourish and flow out in holy exercise. When the church withdraws from his communion, he longs after her, and cries, " Return, return, O Shulamite let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." The church *delights* supremely in Christ, and seeks all her happiness in the enjoyment of him. " A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me." " He brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." " I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." Her present enjoyment of Christ's love kindles in her a holy longing for the complete fruition of him in glory everlasting, and with praying for this, she concludes the song, saying, " Make haste, my beloved."

7. All the *various experiences* of the church militant, are here admirably described. By viewing Christ, she falls in love with him, prays for his direction, and obtains it ; and by viewing herself, is ashamed of her blackness and deformity. When she faithfully follows her beloved, he leads her to his banqueting house ; and when she faints, he comforts her with flagons. In times of darkness and distress, by drawing near to Christ, she comes forth to the light again. When Jesus discovers the strength of his affections, this view draws her to the bosom of his love, still crying for more of the influences of his spirit. At times she falls into carnal security, and Christ withdraws : she awakes again and seeks him in distress : and when she finds him, her love rekindles, and her heart describes his transcendent excellencies.—When her beloved draws near to her, applauds her beauty, and shows the fervour of his affections, she abounds in consolation.—The more she looks at her beloved, and observes the high delight he takes in her, the more earnest does she desire

greater nearness yet unto him.—The song concludes with the church's holy longing to be with her beloved on the mountains of spices, on the everlasting hills of endless joy.

8. Ignorant and carnal men have taken offence at some expressions used by Christ and his church, in describing their mutual love, and setting forth the glory of each other. Such readers do not at all understand the subject; how then can they interpret the language? What Jesus saith spiritually to kindle holy affections in his saints, kindles in them another kind of fire. What is life to the believer, is death to them. Seeing that the Youth of the world for a time make the attachment among lovers the source of their chief delights; what if Jesus took occasion from this circumstance to speak of the love between him and his spouse, as a source of far higher happiness, with a view to allure the souls of men into communion with himself! May we all know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.—Amen.

PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

I. HAVING done with the historical and practical Books, we now come to the *writings of the Prophets* of God, where we shall meet with many things hard to be understood. Hard for two reasons:

1. Because they are *predictions of future events*, for the most part. These books were far more obscure to the ancient Jews, than they are to us: because many things that were future to them, are now past; such as their own history, and the coming of the Messiah, and the Gentiles admitted into the church. Yet many things in the prophets are still future to us also: such as the downfall of Antichrist; restoration of the Jews; the fulness of the Gentiles; the destruction of Gog and Magog; the Millennium, and the end of the world. We know that these events are certain; yet must remain ignorant of many circumstances attending them, till they come to pass and explain themselves.

2. Also, the *manner of writing* adopted by the Prophets, renders them frequently obscure to us. Their style is highly

poetical and sublime, full of figures, with frequent allusions to customs with which we are unacquainted. They speak much by Allegories, Parables, and Metaphors.—An *Allegory*, is to have a meaning different from what is expressed. For instance, when the prophet says, “Thy silver is become dross, and thy wine is mixed with water.” He means, that Israel are woefully degenerated from their former purity.—A *Parable* is inventing a thing, to set forth some real truth.—See Isa. v. Ezek. xix.—A *Metaphor*, is setting forth divine things, by natural things. The last figure is by far the most common in the Prophets. So much for the obscurity of the Prophets.

II. In order to understand them, we must learn where they borrow their figures from ; and the signification of their figurative expressions.

1. The prophets for the most part borrow their figures from *nature*. Some of the most common are these : the sun, moon, and stars ; light, fire, and air ; dew, showers, and rivers ; forests, rocks and hills ; divers beasts, birds and fishes ; darkness and light ; storms and tempests.—They borrow not a few of their figures from the *occupations* of husbandmen, shepherds, vinedressers, fishers and builders : and from various customs at marriages, funerals and mourning.—Likewise they borrow their images from *religion*, and things pertaining to it ; from the temple and its furniture ; ceremonial laws and sacrifices.—And several images are borrowed from *sacred history* ; from the chaos and creation ; from the fall of man and angels ; the deluge, and Israel’s journey from Egypt to Canaan.

2. The most common *signification* of the following terms in the writings of the Prophets.

By sun, moon, and stars ; understand, kings, queens, and men in great authority.

Stately trees, as cedars, oaks, and fir-trees, denote also, kings, rulers, and men in power.—*Briers* and *thorns* signify the lower orders.

High mountains and *lofty hills* are kingdoms, states, and cities.

Great earthquakes and *shakings* mean commotions and overthrow of kingdoms.

Light and *darkness* are figures of prosperity and adversity, knowledge and ignorance, joy and sorrow.

Dew, gentle showers, and still-running waters, denote the blessings of the Gospel.

Heavy rains, floods and torrents, winds, fire and hail, are heavy judgments and ruin.

All *birds, beasts, and fishes of prey*, are emblems of oppressors, tyrants, and conquerors.

Lebanon ; the image of something noble and great.

Carmel : fruitfulness or comeliness.

Vine and vineyard ; the church of God.

Marriage ; the covenant of God.

Adultery ; departure from God to idols.

The daughter of a city ; the suburbs or lesser cities.

Virgins ; cities never conquered.

Ships of Tarshish ; commercial people.

A day ; means a year : *latter day* ; the day of Christ.

By the *earth*, is generally meant the land of Israel.

By the *Islands*, is meant those they traded with.

Places are said to be east or west, north or south, as they stand with respect to Jerusalem.

III. The following rules may assist to understand the writings of the prophets.

1. Always in reading any one of the prophets, inquire *at what time* he prophesied ; especially, whether before, during, or after the captivity. And by comparing his prophecy with the reign of the kings in whose days he flourished, you will see the state of the nation at that time, which will greatly help you to understand what you read. Be also particular in observing what people or nation the prophet is speaking of.

2. When the prophets borrow their images from the natural world, you are to understand something *similar to it in the state, or in religion*. The sun is an emblem of a king, the lion of a tyrant, and a gentle shower, of blessings. And the same rule is to be observed when they speak of shepherds, husbandmen, marriage, adultery, Israel's pilgrimage, temple and sacrifices : we must understand something spiritual that answers to these.

3. The prophecies frequently under one description, allude to *different events*, distant from one another : such as the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans and by the Romans : the first and second restoration of the Jews : the first and second coming of Christ, &c.

4. And frequently, if not always, they have an *historical and a spiritual meaning*. What is said literally of the pilgrimage, enemies, captivities, deliverances, and conquests of the Jews, are true in a spiritual sense of the gospel church. What is said of the temple and sacrifices, is spoken of Christ and Redemption. Babylon under the Old Testament was a type of spiritual Babylon under the new : and Antiochus of Antichrist. So when the Prophets speak of Christ's kingdom and its blessings, or of the spiritual trials of believers, they veil them under types and shadows.

5. The prophets speak of things *to come as if they were already past or present* ; see Isa. chap. liii. because they are certain, and now present with God.—And most commonly, in their *threatenings* against the wicked, they mingle promises to the godly, to support their minds, and as a door of hope before the penitent. And contrariwise, with their *promises* to the godly, they threaten the wicked, to keep them from false comfort, and to caution the godly against security.

IV. The *time* in which each Prophet flourished, as far as appears, was as follows.

Jonah, in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel. See 2 Kings xiv. 25 ; Jonah i. 1.

Hosea, in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel, and in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. In all above eighty years.

Joel, as far as appears, was contemporary with Hosea in the days of Uzziah.

Amos, prophesied against Israel in the days of Uzziah, after the famine that Joel speaks of.

Isaiah, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. In all about sixty-four years.

Micah, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Nahum, in the days of Hezekiah, or Manasseh.

Habakkuk, in the days of Manasseh, or Josiah.

Zephaniah, in the days of Josiah king of Judah.

Jeremiah, began in the 13th year of Josiah : in all 43 years.

Lamentations, in which Jeremiah bewails the miseries of his people, which began at the death of Josiah, and increased till completed in Babylon.

Daniel, flourished from the 3d year of Jchoiakim king of Judah, to the 3d year of Cyrus the Persian : in all 79 years.

Ezekiel, began in the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, continued to the 25th year of the captivity : in all 19 years.

Obadiah, probably in the days of Jeremiah.

Haggai, in the second year of Darius : in all three months.

Zechariah, in the second year of Darius : in all two years.

Malachi, in the days of Nehemiah.

Near upon, or under, the captivity,

{
Jeremiah,
Daniel,
Ezekiel,
Obadiah.
Haggai,
Zechariah,
Malachi.

After the captivity,

All the rest of the prophets, before the captivity.

ISAI A H.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

FROM the beginning to the 40th chapter, the prophet addresseth many nations, and sets before them

their sins, judgments and mercies.—He begins with the church of God, the people of Judah; reproves them for many grievous sins; gives great encouragement to repentance; and warns them of the danger of being carried to Babylon, should they continue impenitent, which takes up the first nine chapters, with great promises intermixed.—He then proceeds to pronounce the judgments of many nations that were enemies to the Jewish church, viz. Assyria, Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Duma, Arabia, and Tyre.—Then gives the history of Sennacherib's coming against Judah; and of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery. Here many precious promises of Christ, great privileges of the church, and some of the songs of Zion are interspersed.—From the 40th chapter to the end of the book, the prophet turns from the nations to the Messiah and his kingdom, and speaks in the plainest language of the person, offices, and grace of the Redeemer: of the Church of Christ: the calling in of the Gentiles: the rejection of the Jews: the folly and guilt of idolatry: and the glory of the church in the latter days.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. A heavy charge against Judah; threats and promises.
2. The happy state of the church in the days of Christ.
3. The pride and wantonness of Judah punished.
4. Glorious times of holiness and peace to come.
5. Parable of the vineyard; the sins and judgments of Israel.
6. Isaiah's vision in the temple: sees the event of his labours.
7. Four nations threaten Judah: Christ is promised.
8. Judah delivered by Assyria: is exhorted to trust in God.
9. The birth of Christ: heavy vengeance on Israel.
10. Predictions of Sennacherib and his army.
11. Of Christ: the power of his gospel on Jews and Gentiles.
12. The church's song in the glorious gospel days.
13. The destruction of Babylon by the Medes.
14. Joy for the fall of Babylon, Assyria, and Philistia.
15. The beginning of the prophecy against Moab.
16. Moab exhorted to be kind to God's people:—threatened.
17. Against Assyria—Israel and Sennacherib's army.

18. A message to Egypt respecting the Assyrians.
19. Egypt's terrible judgments and promised blessings.
20. The distresses of Egypt predicted by a sign.
21. Ruin of Babylon ; burden of Duma, and Arabia.
22. The Jews' hardness in the face of judgments.
23. The destruction and restoration of Tyre.
24. Terrible judgments on Israel ; a remnant escapes.
25. God praised for his judgments and salvation.
26. A song of praise ; exhortation to trust in God.
27. God's care of his church ; chastises her in mercy.
28. Israel threatened : Christ promised.
29. Judgments on Jerusalem : happier times to come.
30. Israel trust in Egypt : better days predicted.
31. The danger of trusting in Egypt : called back to God.
32. Kingdom of Christ ; and pouring out of his spirit.
33. Judgments on enemies : privileges of the godly.
34. Dreadful vengeance on the church's enemies.
35. A view of the kingdom and grace of Christ.
36. Sennacherib sends Rabshakeh against Jerusalem.
37. An angel slays the Assyrian armies.
38. The dangerous sickness and recovery of Hezekiah.
39. The king of Babylon's ambassadors to Hezekiah.
40. The preaching of John and the Apostles ; the majesty of God.
41. God argueth with his church about himself and idols.
42. The offices of Christ ; the promises made to him.
43. Prosperity of the church ; destruction of Babylon.
44. God comforteth his church : the vanity of idols.
45. Cyrus to be a deliverer : God, not idols, to be obeyed.
46. God, not idols, can save : Jews delivered by Cyrus.
47. Judgments on Babylon for pride and cruelty.
48. God foretels how he and Israel should act.
49. The coming of Christ and his benefits to the church.
50. The Jews rejected for rejecting Christ.
51. Arguments why the church should trust in Christ.
52. Christ exhorting his church to rise from bondage.
53. Christ set forth as the Redeemer and Saviour of sinners.
54. The church's enlargement, deliverance, and prosperity.
55. Invitation of Christ ; calls to repentance; success of the Gospel.
56. Encouragement to the pious ; rebuke to the blind watchmen.
57. The danger of the wicked, and felicity of the godly.
58. The nature and benefit of true fasting.
59. Sin the cause of misery ; great promises to the church.
60. The glory, great increase, and triumph of the church of God.
61. Christ's office ; the church's prosperity ; joy in salvation.
62. Confirmation to the church's faith : faithful watchmen.
63. Christ's victories over his enemies, and mercies to his people.
64. The church intreats God to appear for her ; confesses her sin.
65. Unbelieving Jews, believing Gentiles ; latter-day glory.
66. The prosperity of the church ; and vengeance on enemies.

Observations on Isaiah.

1. *Isaiah* was son of Amos, (who, as some think, was brother to Uzziah, king of Judah,) and prophesied under the reigns of four kings: began about seven hundred and sixty years before Christ, and continued for upwards of sixty years. He was a great and learned man, very eloquent, polished and pathetical; and of all the prophets, by far the most evangelical, insomuch that he has often been called the fifth Evangelist. It is said he was sawn asunder in the reign of Manasseh. He was contemporary with Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah.

2. What was the *state of the nation* in the days of *Isaiah*? In the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, the kingdom of Judah was in a flourishing condition. In the reign of Ahaz, it was nearly ruined by the joint armies of Israel, Syria, and other nations, which Assyria stirred up against them. What was still worse, the nation was become extremely profligate. Jerusalem and the temple were filled with idols, by the king's authority.—Hezekiah, when he came to the throne, reformed the nation, destroyed idolatry, restored true worship, and refused to be tributary to the king of Assyria, which brought on the invasion from that country. After a miraculous deliverance from so great a danger, Hezekiah died in peace, leaving the kingdom in a flourishing condition to his son Manasseh, who soon filled the land with profligacy, cruelty, and misery.

3. The *subjects* which *Isaiah* dwells longest upon are these—1. He sharply rebukes the seed of Abraham for their abominable idolatries and iniquities; sets before them their guilt and danger: threatens Israel with bondage in Assyria, which came to pass in his day, and which he describes at large: and warns Judah of being carried to Babylon, though the time was yet distant. He dwells much on the two captivities.—He condemns the abominations of many heathen nations, enemies to the seed of Abraham; threatens them with the severest judgments, and pronounces their destruction.—2. He

calls aloud on Jews and Gentiles to *repent* and turn to God : holds forth the greatest encouragement to reformation ; and tries to allure the nations with sweet evangelical promises of pardon and mercy. It is observable, that no encouragement to repentance, nor any promise of mercy, is mingled with the threatenings of Babylon. Bearing the image of spiritual Babylon, she was devoted to destruction, for her pride and presumption.—3. The prophet all the way through strives to *comfort* and support the godly in their affliction. With this view, he dwells much on the restoration from captivity, as it shadowed forth the glorious redemption of the true Israel, from spiritual bondage and death, by Jesus Christ. He comforts them with the clearest promises of the Messiah, as an all-sufficient, and only remedy against sin and misery. He describes, most beautifully, the person, sufferings, and glory of Immanuel : and foretells all the great things that he was to do for his church in redemption and grace : that he would pour down his spirit to enrich her with all blessings : that all nations should flow unto her : and that great glory should be upon her in the latter days.

4. Isaiah's *manner of writing* is inimitably sublime and beautiful : his style is smooth, lucid, and forcible : his images grand, elegant, and majestic ; often borrowed from kings and courts with which he was familiar. Does he describe the effects of sin ? it is like the piercing of a sword. Does he administer comfort ? it is ointment poured forth. His grand theme is the Saviour of the world. No evangelist could speak more glorious things, or treat in a plainer manner of Christ's character and kingdom than Isaiah does. His descriptions are often so minute and copious, that they look more like history of things past than predictions of things to come. He far exceeds all the prophets in his views of Jesus. In speaking of the Jews' deliverance from bondage, and coming with singing into Zion, he looks through this to the eternal redemption by Christ, till his soul is enraptured with his subject. And whilst he is animating Israel with prospects of their temporal

deliverances, he has such bright views of the great gospel day, that he loses sight of the shadows, drops the allegory, and speaks plainly of Christ's kingdom.

J E R E M I A H .

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE first nineteen chapters contain the substance of different sermons which Jeremiah delivered from the Lord to the Jews : and these are full of reproofs for sin, and solemn warnings of impending judgments.—From the 20th to the 40th chapter, no exact order is observed ; many occasional subjects are introduced ; such as the history of Jeremiah's own times ; the treatment he met with ; many threatenings and promises ; and the restoration of the Jews ; with many plain references to the kingdom of the Messiah.. From the 40th to the 44th chapter we have the history and murder of Gedaliah, governor of Judah ; and of the remaining Jews being taken by Johanan into Egypt.—The 45th chap. relates to Baruch, the disciple of Jeremiah.—The six following chapters declare the fate of several heathen nations, such as Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Damascus, Kedar, Elam, and Babylon.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Jeremiah's commission : almond tree : seething pot.
2. God shows the Jews their unexampled apostasy.
3. God calls on Israel, and more guilty Judah, to return.
4. Bitter lamentations for the sins and miseries of Judah.
5. God's judgments on all ranks, for all manner of sins.
6. The sins, miseries, and impenitence of Judah.
7. Judah is warned and threatened with captivity.
8. Their sins, sufferings, and impenitence bewailed.

CHAP.

9. Lamentation, exhortation, and threatenings.
10. Idols nothing to God : captivity foretold and lamented.
11. God's covenant broken.—Anathoth threatened.
12. Jeremiah reproved.—The Jews' enemies threatened.
13. Linen girdle : bottles with wine : calls to repentance.
14. Famine in Judah : God and Jeremiah plead about Judah.
15. Judgments determined on the Jews : Jeremiah's complaint.
16. Signs of bondage for sins : mercies and judgments.
17. Judah condemned to captivity for leaving God.
18. The potter and his clay : the people argued with.
19. The earthen vessel broken as emblem of Judah's ruin.
20. Pashur's terror and Jeremiah's fretfulness.
21. Jeremiah's warning and advice to Zedekiah.
22. Exhortations : judgments, of Shallum, Jehoiakim, &c.
23. Of false and true prophets.
24. Two baskets of figs, a sign of restoration and desolation.
25. Seventy years' captivity: the ruin of Babylon foretold.
26. Jeremiah's fidelity, persecution and deliverance—of Uriah.
27. Jeremiah by yokes, advised kings to submit to Nebuchadnezzar.
28. Hananiah's contest with Jeremiah about deliverance.
29. Jeremiah's letters to the captives, and of those at Jerusalem.
30. Restoration, and future prosperity foretold.
31. Of Israel's restoration—of Christ and his church.
32. Jeremiah in prison tells the future blessings of the Jews.
33. God's promises of temporal and spiritual blessings.
34. Predictions respecting the Babylonish captivity.
35. The obedience and blessings of the Rechabites.
36. The prophecy of Jeremiah written by Baruch.
37. Jeremiah tells of the victory of the Chaldeans ; is imprisoned.
38. Jeremiah delivered from prison by Ebed-melech.
39. Zedekiah and Judah carried to Babylon.
40. Jeremiah dismissed : the Jews repair unto Gedaliah.
41. Gedaliah killed : Johanan takes the command in Judah.
42. Jeremiah's answers to Johanan's enquiries.
43. Johanan carrieth Jeremiah and others into Egypt.
44. Jeremiah tells of the utter ruin of Jerusalem and Egypt.
45. Jeremiah instructeth and comforteth Baruch.
46. The destruction of Egypt—Comfort to Judah.
47. The judgments of the Philistines.
48. The judgments of Moab.
49. The judgments of Ammon, Edom, Damascus, &c.
50. Judgments of Babylon—Redemption of Israel.
51. Babylon to sink and rise no more.
52. Zedekiah and his people carried to Babylon.

Observations on Jeremiah.

1. *Jeremiah* was a priest in the tribe of Benjamin, and was called in his youth to the prophetic office; began in the 13th year of Josiah's reign, which was seventy years after the death of Isaiah, and continued about forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and for some time after, both in Judah and in Egypt. In all forty-three, some think near fifty years. He lived to see a great part of his prophecy fulfilled in the destruction of the city and temple, and the captivity of Judah. He was at last put to death in Egypt for his fidelity.

2. The *State of the Jews*, in his day, was deplorable. They had even lost the way of God, at the time he began his office: Josiah recovered it in the 18th year of his reign, and faithfully attempted a reformation, but in vain. And God, in judgment upon Judah, took him early away. Isaiah and other prophets had been sent to give the people solemn warnings; to call them to repentance; to proclaim salvation; and to threaten them with tremendous judgments; but all to no purpose. Judah had even seen Israel carried captive, according to the word of the Lord by the Prophets; still they took no warning; but hardened their hearts, and filled the land with idolatry, adultery and murder; with worldliness, pride and oppression; till they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and ripened for ruin. God, in anger, sells them into the hand of their enemies, and Nebuchadnezzar carries them to Babylon, one company after another, during the reigns of the four last kings, and the holy city and temple are laid in ruins.

3. What was the *nature of Jeremiah's message*? It differed materially from that of Isaiah's and the former prophets. They were sent to attempt a reformation; but seeing that all ranks rejected the tender mercies of God, abused his long-suffering patience, and trifled with all his threatenings, Jeremiah is commissioned to proclaim the near and certain ruin of this obstinate,

impenitent, and incorrigible people. He is sent as an herald to pronounce their fatal doom : the destruction both of the temple and city, and their seventy years of miserable bondage in Babylon.—Yet, for the support of the godly amongst them, under these heavy judgments, Jeremiah delivers many sweet promises of mercy : that they shall return to Zion and rebuild the temple ; but above all, that Christ the Messiah is coming to set up his kingdom, and to be the glory of his people Israel. He foretels that they shall be scattered among the nations, yet kept a distinct people, and finally be gathered to Christ. He predicts that Idolatry shall be destroyed, and the Messiah's kingdom become glorious ; that Gentile nations shall flow unto it, and that his covenant with Israel shall be for ever.—Jeremiah predicted, that after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Judah, God would also pour destruction on Egypt, Damascus, and Babylon, with other neighbouring nations, that had either afflicted Israel, or tempted them to sin. Though proud Babylon was at the height of prosperity in the days of Jeremiah, he plainly foretells that she should soon come down to rise no more : that God would utterly destroy her for her cruelty to his church. Events have proved how punctually all these prophecies have been fulfilled.

4. *What sort of a prophet was Jeremiah ?* He was a man of a very tender spirit, who grieved and wept most bitterly, both for the sins and afflictions of his people, till overwhelmed with sorrow in looking at the dreadful judgments which were coming on Jerusalem. He was a bold reprover of sin in kings, priests and people, and spared neither number nor rank. We do not then wonder to find him the deepest sufferer of all the prophets, when his message was to warn a nation laden with iniquity that their destruction was at the door.

5. Jeremiah's style was not so elegant and sublime as that of Isaiah, owing in part to the different nature of their messages. Yet, where he would excite the softer passions of grief and pity, his address is beautiful

and tender to a high degree. And where he describes the approaching judgments, his language is peculiarly vigorous and lively, and admirably pathetic and impressive. Jeremiah gives us, not only predictions, but also the history of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, which came to pass in his day, and which he describes in a plain style fit for narratives.

LAMENTATIONS.

1. WE have here the mournful lamentations of the weeping prophet over the *deep miseries of Judah*, which from the death of Josiah had been increasing with their sins, till they were captives in Babylon. A distant view of the gathering storm so deeply affects the prophet that he cries bitterly, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." But when their desolation is come like a deluge, when they are ruined as a church and as a nation, he exclaims in anguish, "Is there sorrow like unto my sorrow!"

2. The *subjects* which Jeremiah chiefly dwells upon are these. In viewing the desolation of the church and the people of God, he bitterly bewails their unexampled sufferings, describes their tremendous judgments in the most pathetic strain, and proves that God's anger burns against them like a devouring fire. And he justly concludes from the whole, that the sins of Judah must be enormous. The present deplorable state of the nation is contrasted with its former great prosperity, and the miserable change is attributed chiefly to the profligate priests and false prophets.—The prophet counsels the Jews to be patient under their afflictions, after his own example: and exhorts them to repentance, faith and prayer, in order to obtain God's favour, and the removal of his judgments.—Edom is threatened for

rejoicing over Judah's miseries ; and a door of hope is opened for Zion's children.

3. We here learn, that the *true matter of lamentation* is not the loss of wealth, health and favours ; but the overthrow of the church of God, of cities and kingdoms, for men's sins and unthankfulness.—We learn also, that the causes of public calamities are public sins, such as turning from God to idols, and hardening our hearts against the voice of mercy.—We are further taught, that the godly, in time of public miseries, should patiently submit to what God is doing, and faithfully implore his favour in sanctifying and removing present calamities.

4. The lamentation may be considered as a *funeral Elegy* on the death of Jerusalem ; and an incomparable Elegy it is, not equalled in all the world. Where shall we find such an affecting picture of desolation and misery ? Who hath ever used more melting expressions of deep concern, distress, and sorrow ? And where can we meet with so many beautiful and affecting images within so small a compass, or better calculated to excite godly sorrow and contrition, than we find in this tender melting elegy.

5. These lamentations do *infinite credit* to Jeremiah. During all the years he exercised his prophetic office among the Jews, he met with nothing but the most cruel treatment at their hands. But when they are brought into affliction and trouble, he weeps bitterly over them ; mourns and laments to see the church of God in such a low state, and uses every means in his power to bring her back to God, which indeed is the main design of these Lamentations. And doubtless the Jews found them exceedingly useful to them in the House of Bondage, to teach them to lament their former iniquities ; to weep for mercy ; to remember Zion ; and to indulge the reviving hope of being again restored to Jerusalem.

E Z E K I E L.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

IT begins with the mysterious visions which Ezekiel had of Jehovah, by which he was commissioned and qualified for the prophetic office. Chap. i—iii. The prophet begins to exercise his office by sharply rebuking the Jewish nation for their iniquities, especially those that were hitherto at Jerusaleim, and warns them of the total ruin that is coming on their country, city, and temple, for the sins of the priests, prophets, kings and people, which he sets forth in similitudes and visions. Chap. iv—xxiv. He next pronounces the judgments which are conning on Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, for ensnaring and injuring the church of God, and glorying in her tribulation. Chap. xxv—xxxii. Next the prophet turns to the captives in Babylon, and severely censures their murmurings and hypocrisies : preaches to them repentance and mercy, grace and prosperity : proclaims the Messiah's kingdom : foretels the restoration of the Jews, and assures them of the wonderful overthrow of their enemies, Gog and Magog. Chap. xxxiii, xxxiv. Lastly, the prophet's vision of the new and glorious temple to be erected at Jerusaleim.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Vision of four living creatures ; Wheels ; and a Throne.
2. Ezekiel is commissioned and encouraged—Vision of a roll.
3. The prophet is directed and furnished for his work.
4. The siege and famine of Jerusalem represented by signs.
5. The dreadful judgments that are coming on the Jews.
6. The ruin of the land for idolatry ; the prophet's lamentation.
7. The desolation of Israel, and the sanctuary nigh at hand.
8. Abominations in the sanctuary, the cause of this ruin.

CHAP.

9. Penitents spared, and the impenitents punished.
10. The temple and the city to be left desolate.
11. Of bad counsellors—Promises and threatenings.
12. A sign of Zedekiah's flight, and Israel's captivity.
13. Against false prophets, and their untempered mortar.
14. Sore judgments threatened which must come.
15. Useless vine-branch an emblem of Jerusalem's ruin.
16. God's care of Israel, and their ingratitude.
17. Captivity of Jeconiah and Zedekiah by two great eagles.
18. How God dealeth with the righteous and the wicked.
19. Lamentation for Jerusalem and her princes—Zion's vine.
20. God relates what he had done for Israel; their rebellion.
21. Ezekiel sighs, as a sign of slaughter at Jerusalem.
22. Catalogue of sins that bring ruin on all ranks.
23. The whoredoms and punishments of two sisters.
24. Jerusalem to be like a boiling pot, and unpitied.
25. Of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines.
26. Tyrus to be destroyed for rejoicing at the fall of Jerusalem.
27. The glory and fall of Tyre astonish other nations.
28. Lamentation over the proud prince of Tyre—fall of Zidon.
29. Ruin of Egypt—Nebuchadnezzar rewarded for destroying Tyre
30. Egypt to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.
31. The destruction of Assyria shown to Pharaoh.
32. Lamentation over the fearful fall of Egypt.
33. Duties of prophets—Jerusalem must fall.
34. Of wicked shepherds—and of Christ the true shepherd.
35. Edom's judgment for their hatred of Israel.
36. Israel encouraged to look for a happy restoration.
37. The resurrection of the Jews.—Judah and Israel united.
38. Gog and Magog coming against the land of Israel.
39. Israel's victories over Gog and Magog.
- 40—48. Of the new Temple.

Observations on Ezekiel.

1. *Ezekiel* was by descent a priest, and by divine commission, a prophet: was carried to Babylon with Jeconiah, and five years after, was called of God to the prophetic office at the age of thirty, and continued about twenty years. He began some years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah began many years before Ezekiel, and they continued for some years as cotemporaries. It is generally supposed that Ezekiel

was put to death for his great fidelity ; the common lot of the Lord's prophets.

2. What was the *character and condition* of the Jews in the days of Ezekiel ? They were sunk into the lowest degree of degradation in morals, and groaning under the deepest afflictions. Isaiah had failed to reform them ; and the awful threatenings of Jeremiah had produced no amendment ; and when Ezekiel came, he found them determined upon their evil ways. They murmured and complained aloud because God would not remove his judgments, when they refused to depart from their iniquity. Many were already gone into captivity, though hitherto the greater part remained in Judea.

3. One main design of the mission of Ezekiel is to assist *Jeremiah* in his arduous undertaking. You find a great part of Ezekiel's prophecies against those at Jerusalem, when he himself is in Babylon. He takes great pains to convince them of sin ; vehemently reproves them for their unparalleled violation of God's laws : and strongly maintains that their grievous hypocrisy, idolatry, and impenitence, were the cause of their heavy afflictions. He proceeds to assure them, that there is no way of deliverance, but by forsaking sin, and turning to the Lord ; and, with this view, he strives earnestly to rouse them from their carnal security ; to silence their murmurs ; to humble their proud hearts ; and to prevail on them to return to their God. To have such assistance from Ezekiel must be a great support to Jeremiah in his deep distress.

4. Though the one was at Jerusalem, and the other at Babylon, where there could be no communication between them, yet, the *exact agreement* of their prophecies is very striking, and could not but be noticed by the people of Jerusalem. They foretel exactly the same events, and speak the same language, which prove them both taught of God. They both sharply rebuke the Jews for sin, and threaten heavy judgments, especially the Babylonish captivity, with the ruin of the city and temple : they both intermingle promises of the

Jews' restoration, and especially of their spiritual restoration by Jesus Christ : they both prophesy the same judgments on the nations that ensnared or afflicted the seed of Abraham. The exact harmony of the two prophets, must encourage both, and convince the Jews that their testimony was true.

5. Great part of this prophecy is also a *reproof to the captives in Babylon* for their murmuring, unbelief, and hardness of heart. He labours hard to bring them from repining to repentance, and to bow with submission to their present trials. He takes pains to satisfy them that their condition in Chaldea is far preferable to that of their brethren in Judea, against whom he still prophesied more tremendous judgments, even the total ruin of church and state, temple and city, and the extermination of the inhabitants. He predicts the ruin of surrounding nations also ; especially Gog and Magog, the last and most desperate enemies of the church of God.

6. A very considerable portion of Ezekiel's prophecy is given for the *support and comfort* of the pious remnant amongst the captives. His preaching probably increased the number of penitents, who are dejected and discouraged. These he animates with hopes and promises of returning prosperity, and of being restored by Cyrus from Chaldea to Canaan. But more especially, he comforts them with promises of the Church's spiritual restoration by Jesus Christ, under the elegant type of the NEW TEMPLE to be erected, the new worship to be restored, the new Jerusalem to be built, and the new land to be allotted to the twelve tribes. Here the glory of the New Testament Church is admirably described in her best days, till she comes to dwell with Christ on the everlasting hills.

7. The style of Ezekiel is bold and majestic, often obscure, and at times terrific, especially at the beginning and end of his book. The whole prophecy is suited to fill the mind with awe of God's purity, justice, and power; to encourage hope in his mercy, with dread and hatred of sin; to lead our minds and hearts

to Jesus and his kingdom ; and to enliven our hopes of glorious success to the cause of God on earth in the latter days.

D A N I E L.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE first six chapters (the 2d excepted) are *historical*, and describe many very remarkable events which took place in Babylon in Daniel's time, viz.—the Image on the plains of Dura, and the three Hebrews in the furnace ; Nebuchadnezzar driven from the throne to the beasts of the field, and restored ; Belshazzar's impious feast, and the fall of Babylon ; and Daniel in the den of lions.—The last six chapters are *prophetical*, and contain prophecies that extend from the days of Daniel to the Millennium.

Contents of the Chapters.

1. Daniel trained up in the Chaldee learning.
2. Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream interpreted.
3. The golden image, and the three Hebrew brethren
4. Nebuchadnezzar's vision and degradation.
5. Belshazzar's feast, terrors, and death.
6. Daniel exalted by Darius, and cast to the lions.
7. Four beasts, symbols of four universal empires.
8. The ram and the he-goat ; the Persians and Grecians
9. Of the seventy weeks of years until the death of Christ—Prayer.
10. Daniel's glorious vision, distress, and comfort.
11. The dominion and destruction of Antichristian powers.
12. The duration and end of these prophecies.

Observations on Daniel.

1. Daniel descended from the royal family of Judah ; when about twenty years old, was carried to Babylon, in the third year of Jehoiakim, and the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. In two years, he began to prophesy, and continued to do so throughout the captivity, and for a short time after. His last vision was in the third year of Cyrus. It does not appear that he ever returned to the land of Israel; but probably died at Susa on the Tigris, when upwards of ninety years old. Daniel began his prophetic office upwards of twenty years before Jeremiah had finished, and thirteen years before Ezekiel had begun, and continued for many years after them both : in all about seventy-two years.—Daniel was one of the most remarkable men that ever lived. By faith, he overcame the lions : in righteousness is ranked with Noah and Job : in wisdom, he excelled : “ an excellent spirit was found in “ him : ” and his piety was so eminent, that his enemies could find no fault in him.

2. It pleased God to reveal to Daniel far more remarkable events than he had done to any other prophet. His prophecies are of all others the most extraordinary, and by far the most extensive ; comprehending the general history both of the world at large, and of the church of God, under the Jewish and Christian dispensations, from his day to the time of the end. And his predictions show plainly what cruel treatment the spiritual church of Christ was to expect from the world, during all the four great empires, until the reign of the saints commence. Daniel alone of all the prophets, foretells the exact time that Christ should die.—The prophecies of Daniel are divided into five distinct branches : viz. The civil history of the world. 2. The Papacy. 3. Mohammedanism. 4. The reign of Infidelity. 5. And the reign of the Saints.

1. The *civil history* of the world is given in the prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar, chap. ii. and in the first vision of Daniel, chap. vii. The four parts of the

image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the four beasts in Daniel's vision, mean exactly the same things, and these are, the four universal empires that should arise one after another in regular succession, and extend from the days of Daniel to the Millennium ; which empires are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian or Macedonian, and the Roman.—1. The golden head of the image, and the lion with eagle's wings, represent the *Babylonian* empire, which was soon after destroyed by Cyrus the Persian.—2. The silver breasts and arms of the image, and the bear with three ribs in its mouth, are the *Medo-Persian* empire ; which for cruelty was a devouring bear, and swallowed up three kingdoms, and was itself subdued by Alexander the Macedonian, after it had existed two hundred and six years.—3. The brazen belly and thighs of the image, and the leopard with four wings and four heads, mean the *Macedonian* or Greek empire, which, in fifteen years after the death of Alexander, was divided into four separate kingdoms. This empire lasted in all about one hundred and eighty years.—4. The feet of iron and clay ; and the ten-horned beast with iron teeth, diverse from all others, represent the *Roman* empire, which subdued the Macedonian, and was afterwards itself divided into ten kingdoms, and is to continue in one form or other until the Millennium, and is, of all others, the most formidable enemy to the spiritual church of Christ.—These empires are particularly noticed in prophecy, on account of their violent opposition to, and bloody persecution of, the church of God.

II. The second branch of Daniel's prophecy is the *Papacy*. While Daniel was considering the ten horns, or the ten kingdoms of the Roman empire, he saw another little horn springing up among them, and this little horn is the Papacy ; not the temporal, but the spiritual kingdom of the Pope ; his ecclesiastical tyranny, chap. vii. He continued for some time as a horn, or first bishop, in a harmless state. But in the year 606, he was made universal bishop ; and from that time he became an apostate power, the false pro-

phet and the man of sin. He takes possession of three of the kingdoms of the Roman empire, and exercises spiritual tyranny over all the rest. His looks are more stout than his fellows, having iron teeth and a mouth speaking proud blasphemies. When the Pope received his spiritual universal empire, the saints were given into his hands to persecute: he made war with them, and prevailed against them, and shed more of the blood of the saints of God than all the heathens had done from the foundation of the world. The reign of the Papacy is to continue in one form or other, as an idolatrous or infidel power, for the space of 1260 years. During which period, the witnesses or saints are to prophesy in sackcloth, or in a suffering condition.

III. The third branch of this prophecy is *Mohammedism*. As the four great empires seen by Nebuchadnezzar were revealed again to Daniel, for the sake of discovering the Papacy rising out of the fourth, or Roman empire, so two of the same empires are brought a second time before Daniel, viz. the Medo-Persian and Macedonian, under the symbols of the ram with two horns, and the he-goat, for the sake of discovering to him Mohammedism rising out of the third empire, or Macedonian, chap. viii.—The he-goat, or Alexander the Macedonian, broke the two horns of the ram, that is, subdued both Media and Persia. And soon after, the Macedonian empire itself was divided into four kingdoms; and out of one of these, Mohammedism sprang up, under the symbol of another little horn, different from the little horn of the fourth beast, which is Popery.—The little horn of the he-goat, or the spiritual kingdom of Mohammed, is thus described. From small beginning, he waxed exceeding great; employed his power against the host of heaven, God's worshippers; and cast down some of the stars, the brightest luminaries of the church, and stamped upon them: magnified himself against Christ, the Prince of princes: polluted and cast down the sanctuary, the church of Christ: took away the daily sacrifices of prayer and praise, and sacred ordinances: cast down

the truth to the ground : practised wickedness, and prospered in it by crafty policy : set up the abomination of desolation, his own abominable religion, which desolated the church of God, destroyed it almost wholly in all Mohammedan countries, and left not even witnesses to prophesy in sackcloth as in popish kingdoms.

The two great apostasies, Mohammedism and Popery, commenced in the same year, which as far as appears, was the year 606, A. D. They are both to last the same length of time, for 1260 years, and then both to come down together.—During this period of 1260 years, the abomination of desolation, or the two apostasies, are to continue ; the court of the temple, or profession of the church, and the sanctuary, or spiritual church, to be trodden under foot ; the woman to remain in the wilderness ; the witnesses, or true believers, to prophesy in sackcloth, suffering from the two apostasies. But at the expiration of the 1260 years the enemies of God and his church shall be subdued and destroyed together. The ten-horned beast, or Roman empire : the two little horns, the Papacy and Mohammedism ; and the infidel king, or Antichrist, shall all come down together, to rise no more. Now the sanctuary shall be cleansed, the Jews begin to be restored, and the Gentiles called into the church.

IV. The fourth branch of this prophecy (according to Mr. Faber) is *Antichrist*, or the reign of infidelity.—As the four great empires were revealed to Daniel to show him the Papacy ; and again, two of those empires to show him Mohammedism : so this third time, nearly the whole is made to pass in review before him, in order to show him Antichrist, chap. xi. This chapter is a connected history of events from the days of Daniel to the time of the end. Thus, the overthrow of Media and Persia, ver. 1, 2. The power of Grecia, and its division, ver. 3, 4. A complete history of the wars between Egypt and Syria, ver. 5—10. The sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans, ver. 31. The persecutions of the primitive Christians, ver. 32, 33. The conversion of the empire under Constantine, ver. 34.—From

ver. 36 to the end of the chapter, we have an account of the rise, progress, and downfall of a new and infidel power, which is to be a monster of wickedness. And this infidel King is Antichrist. And this Antichrist cannot be either of the two little horns, but a new power distinct from both. He does not spring up at the same time with them; and is described by different marks. He does not make his appearance till after the second (or papal) persecution of the men of understanding, which took place at the reformation. This new infidel power is thus described: he shall speak marvellous things against the true God, neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor Christ, (whom women desired) nor any other god, but shall magnify himself above every object of worship. And yet he will establish a foreign god, and inferior deities, and shall divide the land among the champions of these new gods. The conduct of revolutionary France exactly answers to the description here given of the infidel king. This atheistical power has cast away the living God and his Christ, and the gods of papists and heathens: and after all decreed that *liberty* was a god, canonized infidels, and worshipped human reason. And, as far as appears, this is the Antichrist that was to come, who denieth both the Father and the Son, which the papists never did. And do not the infidel tyrants which now trample on Europe, answer in every feature to the race of men that Peter and Jude predicted would appear in the latter days on the earth? See 2 Peter ii; Jude's Epistle.

V. The fifth branch of the prophecy of Daniel is the *Millennium*, the reign of Christ; called also the reign of the saints. This is to be the fifth universal empire; to begin where the fourth ends, and to last for ever. The Roman empire, the Papacy, Mohammedanism, and Antichrist are all to come down together at the expiration of the 1260 years, which (if they commenced 606) will terminate in the year 1866. Then shall the reign of Christ commence. The prophecies respecting the spiritual empire are not here delivered

separately by themselves; but interspersed through the book, and annexed to each of all the other prophecies. And as we are plainly told that the universal dominion of Christ will commence at the expiration of each of the antichristian powers, this fully proves that they are all to come down together.—When the *fourth empire* terminates, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall break in pieces all the former kingdoms, and stand for ever. Now the stone will become a mountain that shall fill the whole earth, chap. ii.—Where the *Papacy* ends, one like the Son of Man will come with the clouds of heaven, and will receive dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages shall serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And now the time is come, that the saints shall possess the kingdom, chap. vii.—When *Mohammedism* comes down, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed, the daily sacrifice restored, the truth prevail, and the host be no longer trodden under foot, chap. viii.—When the *Infidel tyrant*, or Antichrist comes to his end, then Michael the Prince shall stand up and deliver his people, every one that shall be written in the book: and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to this glorious period, when Christ shall take the kingdom, chap. xii.

Note.—The church of God has already endured two very severe persecutions; the first from heathen emperors; the second from the Papists: a third, far more violent than both these, is yet to come. At the time of the end, the atheistical tyrant and the false prophet, i. e. Antichrist and Popery, will join in league against the rising kingdom of Christ, fully determined to extirpate the religious and church of God from the earth. They shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and shall proceed till they come into the land of Canaan, and there they shall finally fall, Dan. xi. 41—45. When Christ shall come against them in the glory

of his power, there shall be a time of trouble, (to these apostate tyrants) such as never was since there was a nation. After this, Christ and his saints shall reign, chap. xii. Let the spirit and the bride continue to cry, Come Lord Jesus.

H O S E A.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THIS prophecy is a most solemn address, almost exclusive, to the kingdom of the ten tribes. Little is said to Judah, and nothing to other nations. But the kings, priests, and people of Israel are sharply reproved, and loudly called to repentance. As in other prophecies, so here, when heavy judgments are denounced, the glory of the Saviour's kingdom is brought to view, and many great and gracious promises are given.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The prophet's wife of whoredoms, to expose spiritual adultery.
2. Judgment threatened for idolatry : promises made to allure.
3. Hosea's kindness to Gomer, emblem of God's kindness to Israel.
4. Priests and people threatened for many great crimes.
5. Judgment denounced against all ranks in Israel and Judah.
6. Exhortations, lamentations, reproofs, and threatenings.
7. Awful charges against kings, nobles, and people.
8. Reproofs for idolatry, hypocrisy, rebellion and folly.
9. Israel sentenced to a variety of miseries for aggravated sins.
10. Reproofs and punishments : exhortations to repentance.
11. Israel's ingratitude and sufferings ; intimations of mercy.
12. Ephraim's many crimes provoke God to strike in anger.
13. The glory of Israel soon to end in awful desolation.
14. Calls to repentance : promises of great blessings to Israel.

Observations on Hosea.

1. *Hosea was one of the twelve minor prophets (called so, not because they were in any sense inferior to the other prophets, but merely because they wrote less).* He exercised his office in the *kingdom of Israel*, in the reign of Jeroboam the second, about the same time that Isaiah prophesied in Judah : he began rather before him, and continued about eighty years. Though he sparingly directs a few gentle reproofs to the kingdom of Judah, his messages are chiefly to the ten tribes, whom he stiles Israel, Ephraim, and Samaria, because Jeroboam the first, was of the tribe of Ephraim, and Samaria the royal city. The state of the kingdom of Israel in the reign of Jeroboam the second, was, as to outward circumstances, exceedingly prosperous ; but in morals, extremely profligate : which plainly indicates that worldly prosperity without the fear of God is injurious to any people : it leads to sin : and sin leads to ruin.

2. The *nature and design of Hosea's prophecy* is to detect the hypocrisy of Israel, to reprove and convince them of their numerous and aggravated iniquities, especially of their foul idolatries with Jeroboam's calves and Baalim. He strives to awake them to a due sense of their imminent danger, by the terrors of the Lord ; threatening the impenitent with utter rejection ; with dispersion and destruction by the Assyrians, notwithstanding their vain carnal confidence in human means of defence. He labours hard to impress them with a sense of the goodness of God, to bring them to repentance : animates them affectionately to return, by evangelical promises of mercy to penitent believers : directs their eyes to the days of Christ, to the restoration of the Jews, the conversion of the Gentiles, and to the high privileges of the kingdom of grace. But all his efforts prove ineffectual ; he lives to see his predictions fulfilled in the captivity of the ten tribes, and to improve this calamity for a warning to Judah.

3. This prophecy, like all the rest is *designed to*

teach us to know God and man. See what a strong propensity is in man to abuse and sin away his highest privileges ; to forsake his God and turn to idols. How reluctant to relinquish his base forbidden pleasures, and return to the service of his Saviour, where alone he can be happy. Learn here also, what various means God employs to reclaim sinful men. But where threats and promises, judgments and mercies fail to restore men from the error of their ways, destruction must come.

4. Hosea's *style* of writing is peculiar to himself ; it is remarkably abrupt, sententious, and concise, which at times occasions obscurity. His prophecies are more of the nature of proverbial sayings than sermons, which frequently are peculiarly sublime and animated, and always bold and faithful. In his reproofs, he spares not the vices of kings and priests any more than those of the lower orders. His transitions from threatenings to promises are often abrupt and unexpected.

J O E L.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE prophet describes the tremendous judgments that were coming upon Judah, as already come, and exhorts them to repentance : he encourages them to return, with great promises of temporal and spiritual blessings ; describes the peculiar glory of the gospel-day, and predicts the terrible judgments that shall fall on those that continue to resist the Spirit of God.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The desolation of the land : call to repentance and prayer.
2. The locust army : call to fasting : great gospel promises.
3. Judgments on the enemies of the gospel : prosperity of the Church.

Observations on Joel.

1. Joel resided in *Judah*, and prophesied to none but to *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, yet mentions *Israel*, which shows that they were not yet gone into captivity. It is probable that Joel was in *Judah* about the time that *Hosea* was in *Israel*.

2. It is evident that *Judah* was now in a *degraded state* as to religion and morals, for direful judgments are coming down on the whole country. Irresistible armies of divers sorts of insects are coming in succession, and year after year, to devour the produce of the land utterly, as forerunners of a grievous famine and drought, and as emblems of the Chaldean invasion.

3. Joel earnestly endeavours to *rouse* the people of *Judah*, with their kings and priests, out of their ruinous security, and to make them sensible of God's anger; calls aloud on all ranks to mourn and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and to return to him with weeping, fasting, and praying. He encourages them to seek the Lord, with precious promises, not only of the removal of these deep afflictions and of returning prosperity; but also of spiritual blessings when they shall turn to the Lord in truth.

4. Towards the close of the book, Joel, like the rest of the prophets, *looks to Jesus*, and speaks in a most beautiful strain of the transcendent glory of his kingdom. He predicts that inestimable blessings shall flow down under the gospel dispensation. What is most remarkable of all, in the writings of this prophet, are these two points. 1. That there shall be a glorious out-pouring of the Spirit upon young and old in the great gospel-day, which will make the church of God to arise, shine and triumph; and that the Jews shall return to their own land. 2. And also that the most destructive judgments shall fall on those enemies that continue to oppose the dispensation and influences of the Holy Ghost; which came to pass in a remarkable manner on the Jews, who now are, on this very account, a bye-word among the heathen in all lands,

5. We should *learn* from this prophecy, that sin is the reproach of any people, and the source of all our miseries : that it would be our highest wisdom to return by faith and repentance to the Lord our God, whose anger we have kindled against us. And let us learn to praise God aloud that we were born under the gospel dispensation, when the Spirit is poured down ; and take care that we do not resist and grieve the Spirit of God and cause him to depart from us, lest we fall under the curse of the unbelieving Jews.

6. Joel's *style* has every beauty and excellence in it ; highly poetical, and abounding with grand imagery ; it is always clear, flowing, and forcible ; and frequently very animated, elegant and sublime.

A M O S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE prophet begins with threatenings against several neighbouring nations that were enemies to Israel, and reprobates Judah ; but dwells chiefly on the manifold sins, especially the idolatry, of Israel : strongly expositulates with them ; calls aloud on them to repent and reform ; and foretells the captivity and dispersion of the whole house of Israel ; yet saith that they should be kept a distinct people. He concludes with prophesying of the setting up of Christ's kingdom, the conversion of the Gentiles, the final triumphs of the church, and the restoration of the seed of Abraham.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Judgments on Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, and Ammon.
2. Judgments on Moab, Judah, and Israel.

CHAP.

3. Expostulation with, and judgments on the ten tribes.
4. Israel reprobred ; being hardened, are warned of danger.
5. Exhortations, rebukes, threats, and promises.
6. Woes against self-confident Israel and Judah.
7. Grasshoppers, fire, wall and plumb-line—Amaziah.
8. Basket of fruit : heavy judgments : famine of the word.
9. Christ's kingdom : restoration of Israel.

Observations on Amos.

1. Amos was of Tekoa in Judah, but *lived in Israel*, and prophesied chiefly against the ten tribes. He was not the father of Isaiah, nor was he educated in the school of the prophets, founded by Samuel ; but was the son of a shepherd, and employed in gathering sycamore fruit. He was cotemporary with Hosea, began before him, and continued but a short time in his office.

2. As Amos was in Israel at the same time with Hosea, sent to the same people, and on the same occasion, their prophecies are *for substance the same*. Israel were now in great earthly prosperity, yet sunk into dead security and proud confidence. Amos sets their numerous and aggravated sins in order before them ; reproves them with the greatest warmth and indignation, for their luxury, injustice, and oppression, and boldly declares that God will sell them, for their base idolatry, into the hands of strangers, that shall severely afflict them. He pathetically describes their howlings, confusion, and terror, when their desolation comes : takes up a doleful lamentation for them ; and pressingly exhorts them to reform and turn to the Lord, that his judgments may be averted. He holds forth the greatest promises to the penitent, and points forward to the glorious spiritual kingdom which the Messiah shall establish : predicts that in the end, Jews and Gentiles shall be gathered into it, and that the dominion shall be given to the saints.

3. This book is *designed to teach us*, that national sins persisted in, will bring down national judgments,

from which nothing can deliver but turning to the Lord. The people of Israel were growing in hardness with the progress of sin ; and hardened sinners are seldom reformed till melted in the furnace of affliction. Judgment after judgment fell upon them, but they would not hear. When a nation continues impenitent under repeated warnings, that nation has much to dread. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Mark the gracious conduct of the holy God towards a people laden with iniquity. He warns before he strikes, and sends many messengers of mercy before the destroying angel comes ; gives them a long time to repent, and waiteth to be gracious. Listen to the voice of this prophet of God ; what close reasoning, what solemn warnings, what pathetic exhortations, what keen rebukes, and what melting promises do we hear ! All with a view to bring a backsliding nation home to their forsaken God and Father. How loudly does all this proclaim his reluctance to destroy ; his willingness to forgive multitudes of sins, and the infinite delight he takes in the salvation of man. But where all means of mercy fail to reclaim, destruction must inevitably be the tremendous consequence.

4. Amos's *style* of writing has great excellences. His expressions are elegant, though plain. He abounds in sublime sentiments, which he delivers in a very fluent, pathetic, and affecting strain. Many of his images are borrowed from those rural scenes which were familiar to him as a herdsman, to which he gives great force and dignity by his eloquence and fervour : and no prophet rebukes the wicked with more undaunted courage and holy indignation.

O B A D I A H.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Vision.

EDOM is threatened with total ruin—the chief causes of its destruction are mentioned—the glory of Christ's kingdom foretold.

Observations on Obadiah.

1. The *Edomites*, or Idumeans, were the descendants of Esau, who indulged a deep-rooted hatred against the seed of Jacob, on account of the blessings which they had obtained. They expressed their malice against them on every occasion. Whenever the Philistines, Syrians, Assyrians, or Chaldeans invaded the land of Israel, the Idumeans ran in along with them, and exceeded all others in cruelty against Jacob's seed. But more especially when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar the children of Edom cried, “Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation.” And when this was done, they looked on the affliction of their brethren with delight, rejoiced at it, and every way added to their calamities. This cruel conduct of the Idumeans kindled God's anger against them, who sent his servant Obadiah to pronounce their final overthrow, which Nebuchadnezzar soon after accomplished. The prophecy concludes with great promises to Zion, that it shall be delivered, greatly enlarged, and finally made triumphant.

2. All that we know of Obadiah is, that he was a prophet of the Lord, and probably lived in the days of Jeremiah, as they both use nearly the same words against the Idumeans. Obadiah prophesies against *Edom alone*. Though he might not be inferior to other prophets, yet he was employed to write but this one short vision. There is often much of God in a short sermon.

JONAH.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

JONAH is commissioned to go to Nineveh : he flees to Tarsus : goes by sea, and is cast overboard in a storm, and swallowed by a fish : he prays and is delivered. He goes to Nineveh to preach : all the people repent and are spared, and peevish Jonah is very sorry for it.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Jonah's commission, flight, and dangers.
2. His prayers, vows, and singular deliverances.
3. His short sermon and great success at Nineveh.
4. His high quarrel with God's tender mercies.

Observations on Jonah.

1. *Jonah* resided at Gath-hepher, a town in Galilee, in the kingdom of Israel : and prophesied about the beginning of Jeroboam the Second's reign ; see 2 Kings, xiv. 25. He wrote his own life, which is one of the most extraordinary that was ever heard of. His book is a mere narrative, with only one line of prophecy in it, viz. “ Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.” His style is plain, as best suited to a history. But this is a history of wonders, whether we consider the conduct of Jonah or of God.

2. The *conduct of Jonah*, as a man of God, is very extraordinary throughout. He receives the most honourable commission, which he obstinately disobeys, and flees from the presence of the Lord. His perverseness soon brought him into the most perilous situation, yet in the midst of a tremendous tempest he is more stupid than his heathen companions, and will not once call upon his God, till he is in the belly

of hell. He is delivered, sent to Nineveh, and succeeds beyond all preachers. After he delivered one short sermon, he sees a million of people lie prostrate in penitence at the feet of God; and God in mercy spares their lives, at which Jonah grows very angry, till his whole soul is filled with spleen and gall. He had rather the whole city had been destroyed, than to have his credit as a prophet called in question, or that God should shew mercy to any but the Jews alone. Such is man.¹

3. We learn from the *conduct of God* towards Jonah, that it is highly dangerous for any of his messengers to disobey the commission he gives them. Those that forsake his service will be pursued with storms and tempests till they return to obedience. Offenders will find it impossible to shelter themselves by land or by sea, or in the great deep. Behold how wonderful is God's power and providence in preserving his people in their deepest distress, and that often by means the most unlikely! Jonah's grave shall save him from death. See how useful and powerful is prayer in the greatest extremity; and mark how merciful God is to the penitent, and how patient to the peevish: he spares repenting Nineveh, and bears with fretful Jonah.

4. Jonah was an eminent *type of Jesus Christ* in these particulars. Tremendous storms fell upon him; for the safety of his companions he is cast away; and when he is out of the ship, the tempestuous sea is calmed. He is three days and three nights in the deep, then comes safe to land, and then goes to preach to the Gentiles.—Jesus had a suffering life: he died that we might live; his death appeased the anger of God: he was in the grave, and on the third day rose again: and after his resurrection he sent his apostles to preach to the Gentile nations.

¹ As far as appears, the heathens at Nineveh understood the spirit of Jonah's sermon better than he himself did. And in their conduct on this occasion, we have the finest specimen upon record of general humiliation, and the noblest example for guilty nations, when threatened with judgments.

M I C A H.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

'THAT the capitals of both kingdoms must be destroyed, which will occasion the greatest terror. Israel and Judah are reproved for their cruelty to the true prophets, and for their profligacy, falsehood, presumption, and idolatry. Kings, priests, and false prophets are warned of the approaching desolation of city and temple for their iniquities ; yet are informed of the future prosperity, glory, and triumph of the kingdom of Christ. Israel is threatened with the heaviest punishments ; yet animated with predictions of most blessed times to come on the church of God.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The judgments and distress of Samaria and Jerusalem.
2. Reproof for various sins : Israel to be gathered to Christ.
3. Reproofs to all ranks : the city and temple to be ruined.
4. The future prosperity and triumph of the church predicted.
5. Birth of Christ : felicity of his church : ruin of her enemies.
6. Israel's heavy judgments for grievous iniquities.
7. Predictions of the future deliverance and glory of the church.

Observations on Micah.

1. *Micah* was of the kingdom of *Judah*, and cotemporary with *Isaiah* and *Hosea*, but probably begun later than both. He prophesied against Samaria and Jerusalem, that is, against both Israel and Judah. His prophecy, for substance, is much the same with that of *Isaiah*, and on some occasions they express themselves nearly in the same words. God raised up *Micah* as an assistant to *Isaiah*, to second his testimony

of the deep guilt and impending ruin of both kingdoms. It should seem that he lived for some years after the captivity of the ten tribes.

2. Micah, like the prophets of his time, openly, severely, and impartially *reproves* all ranks with great warmth and indignation, especially the rulers both in church and state, for their shameful abuse of power, and example of profligacy. He charges the kings, priests, and prophets, as well as the common people of both kingdoms, with ignorance of God's word, ingratitude, injustice, covetousness and oppression, and especially their abominable idolatries. It is not always clear whether the prophet speaks of the kingdom of Israel or of Judah, or of both jointly. Awful judgments are denounced against them : loud calls to repentance are given, with solemn warnings that the wrath of God is ready to break in upon them : that the two captivities are hastening on, which nothing can avert but national repentance, to which they are called and encouraged by very gracious promises.

3. For the support and comfort of the *godly* remnant still left in the land, encouraging promises are held forth, not only of deliverance from Babylon, but of spiritual privileges by Jesus Christ. The prophet predicts that Christ shall restore the government to his church, and crown her with honour, unity, peace and joy. The coming of the Messiah in the flesh, is plainly foretold ; the very place where he should be born is pointed out ; and his priestly office is described. The establishment and prosperity of his kingdom ; the glory and final triumphs of his church over all her enemies and afflictions, are predicted as the effects of the Messiah's mediation.

4. This book abounds with very useful instructions for the *church of God* in all ages. Let us here learn to beware of the danger of being deaf to the warning voice of the true prophets, or preferring false teachers ; and of continuing impenitent, after repeated warnings of approaching judgments. We see that when the Lord begins to afflict a degenerate nation, that he

proceeds till it is either reformed or ruined. When his anger kindles, yea, but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him. The godly are here directed where to derive their supports, hopes and prospects from, in times of public sins and national calamities; that they are to look to Jesus and his blessed offices as their only source of deliverance from all evils in time and in eternity.

5. Micah's *style* or manner of writing is nervous and concise, animated and poetical, yet sometimes obscure, through sudden transition from one subject to another.

N A H U M.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

NINEVEH is warned of her approaching ruin for her great iniquities, and called upon to expect it. Her desolation and misery are described for the encouragement of Israel and Judah, with other nations, whom she had afflicted.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. God's love to his people, and vengeance on the Assyrians.
2. The ruin of Nineveh and the Assyrian empire described.
3. Nineveh is warned that her destruction is inevitable.

Observations on Nahum.

1. *Nahum* was in Judah, probably in the reign of Hezekiah. His book is one entire poem on the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Some compute that he prophesied ninety years after Jonah, and sixty years before the final overthrow of Nineveh

by the Medes and Babylonians, under Cyaxares and Nebopolassar, who overturned the Assyrian empire.

2. Nahum begins by setting forth the power, justice, and mercy of Jehovah. Then turns abruptly to the Assyrians, and *warns* them plainly, that God is coming to take vengeance on them as his enemies, and that this would be done in favour of Israel, for which Judah is called upon to rejoice. Nineveh is summoned to prepare to meet the formidable armies that are coming against her. Then the siege, overthrow and final ruin of this great city: the flight, lamentation, and terror of its inhabitants are described by lively and sublime images, and in the most vigorous and pathetic terms. A woe is pronounced against guilty Nineveh for her enormous iniquities, and plain warning is given, that her great population, wealth and confidence could not save her from total ruin, which was now determined upon. And this the Chaldeans accomplished with ease, whilst the nations she had oppressed exulted in her fall.

3. The main *design* of this most beautiful and sublime poem seems to be, to administer consolation both to Israel and Judah in times of deep adversity, by being informed that their Assyrian oppressors should soon be utterly subdued by the Babylonians. The Assyrians had carried Israel captive, whom they treated cruelly; they had also repeatedly harassed and alarmed Judah exceedingly. Nahum therefore is commissioned to proclaim, for the comfort of the people of God, the final overthrow of Nineveh and the Assyrian empire. He is not sent like Jonah to bring them to repentance, but to declare positively their inevitable and final ruin.

4. *Learn here*, the danger of abusing God's long suffering patience and loving kindness, as the Ninevites did to their ruin. We see that where repentance is not unto life, men will soon revert and sink again in sin, and deeper than before: and that backsliding after repentance and mercy, does, above all sins, kindle God's anger against us. We learn here also, that when Jehovah comes, determined to destroy, no power

can deliver. Nineveh was an exceeding great and strong city: at this time, the metropolis of the greatest empire in the world. It was sixty miles in compass, and full of people. Its walls were one hundred feet high, and broad enough for three chariots to run abreast upon it, and defended with one thousand five hundred towers of two hundred feet high. Yet in the course of a few years, not a stone was left standing, and now its situation is not known. This should teach all after ages, that no city, kingdom or state, however powerful or populous, but shall be utterly broken by omnipotence, when they grow insolent against God, and cruel to his church and people.

5. The *style* of Nahum's writing possesses every excellence. Perhaps none of the lesser prophets equal him in sublimity, fire, and boldness of spirit. The whole poem is admirably well arranged, and is reckoned to be one of the most finished in human language.

H A B A K K U K.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE prophet deeply laments the sinfulness of the Jews, the judgments that are coming on them, and the prosperity of the cruel Chaldeans.—God informs the prophet that the Chaldeans shall suddenly be destroyed for their abominable tempers and conduct.—The prophet, for the comfort of the godly, speaks of the wonders God had wrought for Israel in ancient times, and resolves himself to trust in him, in the worst times.

*Contents of the Chapters.***CHAP.**

1. The great sins and sufferings of the Jews.
2. The greater sins and judgments of the Chaldeans.
3. The goodness and mercy of God to his people

Observations on Habakkuk.

1. *Habakkuk* was in Judah, probably at the same time with *Jeremiah*, when the nation was at the lowest degree of depravity, and their captivity nigh at hand. This book is written in the form of a dialogue between the prophet and God, respecting the captivity of Judah and the destruction of the Chaldeans. Of all the nations that had injured and afflicted the church of God, the chief were the Edomites, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans : and three of the prophets are raised up on purpose to pronounce judgments against each of these nations. *Obadiah* foretells the destruction of the Edomites ; *Nahum* prophesies the ruin of the Assyrians who carried captive the ten tribes ; and *Habakkuk* predicts the final overthrow of the Chaldeans who took the remaining tribes to Babylon.

2. The prophet begins this *affecting dialogue* very abruptly, with mourning over the extreme wickedness of the land of Judah.—The Lord tells him that the Chaldeans shall very soon afflict them with the severest judgments.—The prophet in the name of the Jews, complains that a nation more wicked than themselves should be suffered to devour them.—Here God promises deliverance in due time by the Messiah, encourages the godly to live by faith in deep and long affliction, and engages that their fierce oppressors, the instruments of his wrath, should be destroyed by the Medes and Persians.—This view of future mercies animates the prophet to pray that God would revive his work and appear for his people. He recounts the miracles he had wrought for them in days of old,

to encourage them to hope for future deliverances out of all their distresses. In the prospect of judgments which made him tremble, he concludes with strong expressions of his firm confidence in God's goodness and mercy.

3. The *design* of this remarkable prophecy is not meant as a warning to the Chaldeans: no exhortation to repentance, nor promise of mercy is given them; for the Lord determined to destroy this fierce, greedy, dissolute and ambitious nation. And this prophet is sent to foretel their certain and final ruin, for the comfort of the tribes they were about carrying captive, and especially for the support and consolation of the godly, by directing their eyes to the future deliverances and triumphs of the church of God, over all her enemies, which the destruction of the Chaldeans shadowed forth.

4. Much *instruction* is here conveyed to us. We see that the church of God may degenerate under all the means of grace, and grow exceedingly corrupt; which never fails to kindle God's anger against her. Where both judgments and mercies fail to reclaim, heavier judgments are yet to come. We see also that God punisheth one guilty nation by another more guilty than itself; and after this is done, God breaks the rod of his vengeance, and finally destroys the instruments of his wrath. But his mercy and loving kindness never wholly leave his church. He watches her in the furnace of affliction, supports her with promises of future mercies, and never fails to raise her up in his own due time. By seeing what he has done for his people, and by hearing the gracious voice of his great promises, let us learn in the worst times, to put our trust and confidence in God.

5. Habakkuk's *style* is universally admired. He stood high amongst the sacred poets. His spirit is full of fire and impetuosity: his imagery abounds in grandeur; and his diction very pathetic and sublime. Many wrote more; but none wrote better.

ZEPHANIAH.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE prophet strives to convince Judah, that for their great iniquities, the Chaldean invasion is nigh at hand, which he describes in a very affecting manner.—Exhorts them to repentance, and to seek the Lord in time.—Denounces judgments against several other nations, who had injured the Jews,—Concludes with the most animating predictions of the great prosperity of the church in gospel times.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The sins and judgments of Judah and Jerusalem.
2. The judgments of surrounding nations.
3. Predictions of the future prosperity of the church.

Observations on Zephaniah.

1. *Zephaniah* was in Judea in the reign of Josiah, about the time that *Jeremiah* began to prophesy : their subjects, and mode of handling them are similar. This is the last of the minor prophets before the Babylonish captivity.

2. The prophet *begins* with denouncing judgments against Judah and Jerusalem, for the apostasy and idolatry of the people, the pride and profligacy of princes, the covetousness and violence of merchants, the security and infidelity of all. He describes the judgments of God as very near, terrible and irresistible :

exhorts them to take refuge under the wings of mercy, as the only possible way to escape. In chap. ii. he makes a digression, and foretells the judgments of nations that had ensnared and afflicted Judah, or rejoiced in their sufferings, especially the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians, and the Assyrians, with Nineveh their capital, which were all destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. In chap. iii. the prophet returns again to reprove Jerusalem, for her oppression, disobedience, unbelief, and obduracy; for the injustice and cruelty of civil governors, the corruption of priests and prophets, and the incurableness of the nation, even when they saw the judgments of God upon the heathens. He concludes with sweet consolations to the remnant of true Israelites, by foretelling the conversion of the Gentiles, the final overthrow of God's enemies, and the happy state of the church of Christ. He predicts that Zion shall be full of purity, faith and peace; that the Messiah shall deliver his people, and dwell in the midst of them, love and save them, joy over them, and exalt them into great glory. In the prospects of which the prophet exults and triumphs, and calls on Zion to sing with gladness, and to shout for joy.

3. We learn from this prophecy, that when a land is universally depraved, when all ranks are deeply corrupted and refuse to return, that heavy judgments are nigh at hand. To restore an apostate nation is extremely difficult. Though God sends one prophet after another to warn, to reprove, and to counsel, yet they will not hear: though they witness other nations suffering under the anger of God for sins like their own, yet they take no warning; for the very nature of sin is to blind the mind and harden the heart. How marvellous and free is the grace of God! It breaks forth even when his just and heaviest judgments are pouring down. God never loses sight of establishing the Messiah's kingdom in the midst of a rebellious self-ruined world: he remains determined to gather his people from all nations; to keep them safe when surrounded with dangers; to build them up in holiness

and happiness in spite of earth, and hell. He has unchangeably decreed, that all the enemies of Zion, however strong and numerous, shall be subdued; and that his saints shall, in the end, sing and triumph in their God.

H A G G A I.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE prophet reproves the Jews for leaving off building of the temple: exhorts them to go forward with the work: and animates them with the most powerful motives to proceed and finish the house of the Lord; especially with predictions of Christ's coming into that house, and of the universal spread of his gospel.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The Jews reproved for neglect: exhorted to build the temple
2. Encouragements given to build the house of the Lord

Observations on Haggai.

1. *Haggai* was the first of the three prophets which appeared after the return of the Jews from captivity. He entered on his office eighteen years after they came to Jerusalem, and about five hundred and twenty before Christ, and continued to prophesy only for four months.

2. *Haggai* was raised up to deliver *several sermons* to the people of the Jews, respecting building the

temple of God. The foundation had been laid since the second year after their return to Jerusalem ; but they had left off building for eighteen years, through the opposition of their adversaries, and the edicts of the Persian king ; but more especially, through the covetousness, coldness, and cowardice of the Jews themselves, who were all bent on their own private concerns, and pleaded that it was not time to build the house of God, being more inclined to build their own houses. Such was the state of things at Jerusalem, in the days of Zerubbabel.—The Lord God, in zeal for his own glory, and in mercy to his people Israel, inclines Darius to renew the decree of Cyrus for erecting the temple. And God raiseth up Haggai the prophet, to recall the people to the work, and to finish the house of God, and to establish his worship in it.

3. We should notice the *manner* in which he executes his high commission. He comes in the name of the Lord to awaken, direct, exhort, and to encourage the governor, with the high priest and the people, to build the temple of God.—He first reproves them for their unconcern, neglect, and slothfulness ; and tells them that this was the cause of the distressing scarcity which they had endured for sixteen years.—He then exhorts them to go forward with the building, and encourages them with great promises and powerful motives, saying, ‘ that when they build God’s house, they shall have abundant prosperity ; that God will be with them, and will furnish them with all things necessary to finish the work : ’ but above all other arguments, he animates them with predictions of Christ’s coming in person to this very temple, which would make its glory far greater than that of the first temple, though in appearance inferior to it. These weighty arguments, through the co-operation of the spirit of God, prevailed with the people to set about the work in real earnestness, which they carried on in the face of strong opposition, and the building was completed in four years.

4. We learn here, that the building of the *church*

of Christ (which the temple typified) meets with strong oppositions from its enemies, and that the building at times goes on but slowly. They whose office it is to erect this holy temple, are greatly hindered by various temptations and trials, and in constant danger of being carried aside by their own corruptions, to mind earthly things, and to lie down in some sinful indulgences, to the neglect of their great concern. When these builders cease from their work, God in great mercy raiseth up some peculiar instruments of similar spirit and zeal with Haggai, to rouse them from their lethargy, and to re-animate them to rear the sacred temple. That it shall be completed, is a determined point with God, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. In due time the top-stone shall be brought forth, with shouting “Grace unto it.” This glorious temple shall stand for ever, as a monument to show what the grace of God can do in a fallen world.

ZECHARIAH.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

THE prophet animates the Jews to rebuild the temple: foretells that they shall complete it, and afterwards greatly prosper, when their enemies are punished: all this is to be understood of the spiritual temple of our great high priest.—Then the history of the Jews and other nations until the coming of the Messiah is foretold: and he shows that Christ shall die, his gospel prosper, and the Jews be rejected; but afterwards shall be gathered to Christ, together with the Gentiles; and finally, that the kingdom of Jesus shall universally prevail.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The Jews animated by various promises to build the temple.
2. Great prosperity, under God's protection, to follow.
3. Joshua before the angel : resisted by Satan.—The branch and stone.
4. That God will cause the temple to be completed.
5. The heavy judgments that were to come on the Jews at last.
6. Of the four great monarchies : and of Christ's kingdom.
7. Exhortations to fasting, justice, and mercy.
8. Great prosperity to succeed the building of the temple.
9. Judgments on nations : the benefits of Christ's kingdom.
10. Singular promises made to the Church of God.
11. The Jewish nation to be rejected for their contempt of Christ.
12. The restoration of the Jews at the time of the end.
13. The coming of Christ, and the state of the church.
14. The glory and triumph of Christ's church in the end.

Observations on Zechariah.

1. *Zechariah* was at Jerusalem, and began to prophesy two months later than Haggai, and continued long after him ; soared higher in visions, and spoke more particularly of Christ. God raised up this prophet to second the efforts of Haggai to excite the Jews to build the temple of God, and they succeeded.

2. The *design* of the first part of this book is to rouse and encourage the returned Jews, especially their governors, Zerubbabel and Joshua, to finish the house of God, where the church might have a seat and dwelling-place until the coming of Christ ; to this he animates them with promises of great prosperity as a church and nation. At the same time he instructs the people to consider Zerubbabel and Joshua, the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem, as types of Christ and his church.

3. *Zechariah* penned *eight prophetical visions*, which appear to have been all delivered at once : some are visions of mercy, some of judgment, and some of comfort ; viz. Visions of mercy : a man on horseback

among the myrtle trees. The four horns, and four carpenters. The man with the measuring line. Joshua, the high-priest. The golden candlestick, and the two olive trees.—Of *judgment*: The flying roll, and the ephah.—Of *comfort*: The four chariots. The kingdom and priesthood of Christ.

4. He delivers many admirable *prophecies of Christ*; of his kingly power and priesthood; the price for which he should be betrayed; the effusion of his Spirit; the efficacy of his Gospel; the calling of the Gentiles; and of many of the high privileges of the church in grace and glory. Here Zechariah excels all the minor prophets.

5. He also forewarns the *carnal Jews*, that for their enmity against Christ and his Gospel, tremendous judgments would fall upon them, till their city, temple and kingdom were destroyed by the Romans, and that it should continue in ruins till they were converted to Christ, which in due time would take place; and that the Millennium should at last arrive, when all the opposers of Christ's kingdom should be terribly destroyed; and finally, that Jesus would crown his church with universal dominion, and fill her with holiness, peace and prosperity.

6. We are in this book instructed that *repentance* is necessary to promote public reformation. And that all of us in our own sphere should cheerfully and zealously assist to build up the spiritual temple, and indulge a holy confidence that the Lord will be with us, and prosper his work; and that the feeblest instruments in his hands must prevail against the greatest difficulties.—Learn here also that we have the greatest cause to accept of Christ by faith, for all who continue to oppose the reign of grace must inevitably perish. Let us also firmly believe what is here predicted of the universal dominion of holiness in the last days.

M A L A C H I.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

REPROOFS for many great abuses which prevailed among the Jews, especially the priests.—The coming of John the Baptist: the near approach of the Messiah: the effects of his appearing, and the spread of his Gospel, with exhortations to keep the law.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The Priests reproved for abusing God's ordinances.
2. Priests and people reproved for divers abuses and crimes.
3. Predictions of John: of Christ, and the end of his coming.
4. The people charged to observe the Law of Moses, and John.

Observations on Malachi.

1. *Malachi* was at Jerusalem, probably about the latter end of the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, or soon after them. How long he prophesied does not appear; but he left off four hundred years before Christ. Prophecy ceased from his time until the Messiah came.

2. We should here notice the *moral state of the Jews* in the days of Malachi. The city and temple had been for some time rebuilt, and the ancient worship happily restored, and conducted properly for a while. But in the days of Malachi, the Jews had woefully declined in zeal and piety; the temple service was dreadfully corrupted, and many enormous sins prevailed among the people, especially the priests. Irreligion, profaneness, adultery, mixed marriages, polygamyies, divorces, rebellion, contempt of Providence, hypo-

crisy, sacrilege, and infidelity, with many other sins, abounded through the land.

3. Malachi was raised up to *testify against the wickedness* of priests and people, to remove abuses, and to revive religion amongst them. Haggai and Zechariah were sent to reprove the Jews for delaying to build the temple; and Malachi comes to rebuke them for their neglect and profanation of the temple service, when it was built. They had now ran from idolatry and superstition to impiety and irreligion; which plainly shows that man is prone to go into extremes, and is naturally averse to keep in the right way of serving God according to his own appointments.

4. The prophet invites the Jews to *repentance* and reformation of all these gross abuses, by promises of grace and manifold blessings, especially in gospel times. He proclaims the forerunner of Christ as coming, and speaks more plainly than any of the prophets of the near approach of the Messiah, and shows what would be the effects of his coming on different characters; that he would purify his church, call in the Gentiles, and make his gospel prosperous. He concludes with directing the Jews to walk according to the law of God until Christ appeared.

SCRIPTURE DIRECTORY
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

The Books of the NEW TESTAMENT are divided into three classes :

1. Historical.
2. Epistolary.
3. Prophetical.

I. HISTORICAL.

1. The History of Christ the Head of the Church, by.....	Matthew. Mark. Luke. John.
2. The History of the Church of Christ in the	Acts of the Apostles.

II. EPISTOLARY.

1. <i>General</i> .—To believing Jews.....	Hebrews. James. 1 Peter. 2 Peter. 1 John. Jude.
2. <i>Particular</i> .—To believing Gentile Churches.....	Romans. 1 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians. Galatians. Ephesians. Philippians. Colossians. 1 Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians.
3. To individual persons.....	1 Timothy. 2 Timothy. Titus. Philemon. 2 John. 3 John.

III. PROPHETICAL.

Of the State of the Church to the End of Time.....	The Revelation of St. John.
--	-----------------------------

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE *grandest work of God*, is the redemption of the world, and the salvation of his Church through the mediation of his eternal Son. All other things are but appendages to this one great plan of God. All in creation and providence are but so many lines which terminate in this one central point—the salvation of sinners. As scaffolds are taken down when the building is completed; so shall the visible creation be taken away, when the spiritual temple is finished.

The grand *end* of God in the creation of man was to communicate to him of his own happiness. Man fell and sunk into misery. Jesus came to restore him to God, that he might again enjoy the happiness he had forfeited. The way in which God communicates of his own felicity to his people is, by making himself known unto them, and by giving them to partake of his own nature. He illuminates the understanding, and renovates the heart, to make them holy, that they may be happy. The pure in heart shall see God. The Lord reveals himself unto us in various ways, but chiefly in giving his Son to die for our redemption. Some glimmering knowledge of the great God dawns on the human mind, through the works of creation and providence; but in the great redemption, the love of God flows like an eternal river, and his grace shines with

the brightness of the sun at noonday. When we behold the incarnate God suffering, bleeding, and dying, to atone for sins committed against himself, that he might deliver his enemies from death and hell, and raise them to holiness and heaven, we cry in admiration, "Who is a God like unto thee!" Here grace is magnified, man is made happy, and God has accomplished his design.

The glorious *gospel* of the blessed God is given to us to teach us the way of salvation through a Mediator. Well may it be called, "glad tidings of great joy;" for it reveals a glorious Saviour, proclaims salvation to a lost world, and sets before us a new and living way to the Father. It opens a door of life to the dead, and a door of hope to despairing sinners. It invites the greatest sinner to return, and offers grace and glory. The gospel informs us that redemption's work is done, and salvation finished. All things are ready, and God waiteth to be gracious. Sinners are invited to drink of the water of life freely; and whosoever cometh unto Jesus he will in nowise cast out, but will give unto all that receive him "power to become the sons of God." Such is the language of the gospel.

As there never was but one way of salvation for sinners, there can be *but one gospel*. It was the same in the days of the Patriarchs, of the Prophets, and of the Apostles. The same Jesus and the same way of salvation were preached unto the Jews, as are preached unto us. Moses wrote of Christ, and the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The grand business of both the Old and New Testament is, to set forth Christ and his salvation. They agree in their testimony without a shadow of variation. What is said of Christ in the New Testament, is, in fact, said in the Old. They are but two editions of one and the same Testament. Yet Christians have great advantages over the Jews of old. Christ was preached unto them in the language of prophecy, in types, and shadows; but he is preached unto us in the plain language of history, and exhibited to our view without a veil. The day of

salvation began to dawn on this benighted world in the days of Adam, and gradually brightened through succeeding ages; yet considerable darkness still remained until Messiah came, when the shadows were dispersed before the splendour of a perfect day. We have also the advantage of living more than they under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, who "takes of the things of Christ, and sheweth them unto us."

2. It pleased God to commission four different persons to write the life of Christ; yet there are not four gospels, but one gospel in four books. The work allotted to each of the Evangelists was, to give to the world a plain and faithful narrative of the real character of the Saviour. They were not at liberty to invent or embellish their history, but to state plain matters of fact, to tell the world what manner of person he was, what he did, suffered, and taught, and for what end: and being under the guidance of the Holy Ghost they could not err. They gave us a perfect representation of Immanuel the Saviour. They have set before us the miraculous incarnation of the Son of God, his spotless life and heavenly conversation, his powerful ministry and spiritual doctrines, his stupendous miracles, his unexampled sufferings, his vicarious sacrifice, his humiliating burial, his glorious resurrection, his triumphant ascension into heaven to intercede for us. They give us a full and perfect account of his two natures; and of his offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet. And they fully prove that he has done all that was necessary to redeem the world, to work out a finished salvation, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, "that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We should here notice the following particulars.—
1. That though the four evangelists wrote the life of the same Jesus, no two wrote *exactly alike*. Every one adopts his own plan and style, and records some things which the rest omit; and when they seem to vary with regard to circumstances, they invariably agree as to facts. This clearly shows that they wrote apart, and

not in concert. 2. The four evangelists, however, exhibit the *very same* character, the same Jesus, and the same salvation. The Saviour described by St. Matthew, differs in no degree from the Saviour described by Mark, Luke, or John. 3. Each evangelist also sets before us a *perfect* character—one without spot or blemish, and one that did the whole will of God without a flaw or imperfection. 4. What they all say of Jesus likewise proves him to be the true and long-expected *Messiah*. They show that he answers to all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Saviour that was to come. None but Jesus ever did this; the conclusion is sure—Jesus of Nazareth must be the Messiah of the Old Testament. 5. Lastly, they all describe him as the *very Saviour we need*—one that can take away sin, and renew the soul: one that can supply all our wants, and save to the uttermost: one in whom all fulness dwells, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

The young reader should be reminded, that the doctrines of Christ are not all delivered in sentiments, precepts, and promises, nor arranged in a methodical system; but interspersed through the whole history of Christ, and interwoven with every branch of it. We are instructed in the mysteries of Christ by observing his character and conduct on all occasions, as well as by hearing the language of his mouth. Let all that call themselves Christians look unto Jesus, and hear his voice. Read, believe, and live.

SCRIPTURE DIRECTORY.

ST. MATTHEW.

The Order and leading Subjects of the Gospel by this Evangelist.

THE whole may be comprised under these four divisions.—1. The pedigree, birth, and infancy of Jesus.—2. His three steps of preparation for his public ministry.—3. The manner he fulfilled his ministry as the King, Priest, and Prophet of his Church, the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought.—4. His last great sufferings, death, and resurrection.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The genealogy, conception, and birth of Christ.
2. The wise men guided by the star : Joseph flees into Egypt : Herod murders the infants : Jesus is brought to Nazareth.
3. The ministry of John, who baptizes Christ in Jordan.
4. Christ's temptations in the wilderness : he begins to preach, to call his disciples, and to heal diseases.
- 5, 6, 7. Christ's sermon on the mount.
- 8, 9. A catalogue of his marvellous miracles.
10. Christ ordains and commissions his twelve apostles.
11. His testimony for John, and against unprofitable hearers.
12. His disputes with the Pharisees concerning the sabbath, signs, and miracles.
13. He delivers eight of his parables.

14. He flees from Herod, feeds multitudes, walks on the sea, calms the storm, lands at Gennesaret, and heals diseases.
15. He reproves the Scribes and Pharisees for their vain traditions, heals multitudes, and feeds four thousand.
16. He exposes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees, warns his disciples against them, and foretells his death.
17. Christ's transfiguration on the mount : he heals the lunatic, and pays tribute.
18. He bids his disciples to be humble, loving, and forgiving.
19. He discourses of divorce and marriage, receives infants, and shows how hard it is for the rich to be saved.
20. The parable of the vineyard : the apostles' ambition reproved.
21. Christ enters Jerusalem and the temple, shows the power of faith, and the rejection of the Jews.
22. The marriage supper : disputes with the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and Lawyers.
23. He denounces eight woes against the Pharisees, for their blindness and hypocrisy : foretells the ruin of Jerusalem.
24. He predicts the ruin of the temple : the miseries that follow : how unexpectedly the end of the world will come.
25. Of the ten virgins, of the talents, and of the last judgment.
26. Jesus is betrayed, apprehended, and cruelly treated.
27. He is brought before Pilate, condemned, and crucified.
28. He rises from the dead, and meets his disciples in Galilee.

Observations on St. Matthew.

1. Let the reader, first of all, turn his attention to the *coming of Christ in the flesh*, where he may see enough to fill him with admiration, and to kindle within him a flame of love that never shall be quenched.

1. Who is this that is born of a Virgin ? He is no common character. Variety of circumstances point him out us a very extraordinary Personage. Great preparations, for some thousands of years, were made for his coming. The prophets of every age prepared the minds of men to receive him. Vast expectations of the arrival of the great Messiah were excited in all lands. Kings, priests, and prophets longed for his appearing. Abraham saw his day and leaped for joy. At length, in God's appointed time, Messiah came. The Son of God becomes the son of man ; he vails his

glory and is clothed with flesh. This act of God will be admired by the redeemed through all eternity. It is thus described by one of our poets—

“ God’s only Son (stupendous grace)
Forsook his throne above ;
And swift, to save our wretched race,
He flew on wings of love.

Th’ almighty former of the skies
Stoop’d to our vile abode ;
While angels view’d with wond’ring eyes,
And hail’d th’ incarnate God.”

He who made the world now enters into the world. He who gave birth to all creation is born of a woman. He who bears all things up with the word of his power, is himself supported in the arms of his mother, and the Ancient of Days is become an infant of days. He who fills all heaven with his glory is wrapped in swaddling clothes. The babe at Bethlehem is God in the flesh. He puts on the nature of man, and will wear it for ever in his kingdom. He is now our elder brother in the midst of the throne. All this appears absurd to the infidel, but is a source of endless joy to believers. What is life to one is death to the other. And “ if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; ” but, Blessed are all they that put their trust in our Immanuel.

2. For *what end* is the Son of God arrayed in human flesh ! The gospel informs us, that he comes down from heaven, that we may go up to heaven. He is made the son of man, that we may be made the sons of God. He takes to himself the human nature, in order to make us partakers of the Divine nature. He is “ made sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him.” He comes into the world to seek and to save them that are lost ; to be the mediator between God and man : it is therefore necessary that he should have the nature of both, in order to make reconciliation. In a word, Jesus comes down to redeem the world from sin and death, and to be for salvation to the ends of the earth.

3. When such an august personage appears on the earth, for such a glorious purpose as Redemption, may we not expect him to come surrounded with all possible grandeur? After thousands of years were spent in preparing his way, and universal expectations excited, it was natural to look for one clothed with majesty and splendour. But the ways of the Lord are not our ways. Jesus comes not with observation, but in a style too meekly to be known. He comes in the lowest circumstances of *abject poverty*; born of a poor woman at the stable of an inn, to teach us by his first appearance that his kingdom is not of this world; and that the great things of earth have no attraction with him who is heir of all things. The poverty of Christ should teach the poor contentment, and excite all to deny themselves for the good of others. For "he who was rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." The highest of all is the poorest of all. The Heir of Heaven is born in a manger.

4. Yet there are circumstances attending his birth that bespeak the *dignity* of his person. Bright beams of glory shine through shades of darkness. In the midst of his humiliation, there is a peculiar splendour cast around him. No sooner is the birth of Jesus announced, than Herod the King trembles on his throne, and all Jerusalem with him. The angels of God are in a transport of joy; an herald is sent down from heaven to proclaim his birth to the shepherds of Judea. With this a multitude of the heavenly host sung a sweeter song than heaven had ever heard. These morning stars sang together, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. The new-created star stands over Bethlehem, pointing to the spot where the Saviour is born, and the men of the East offer him adoration, in which all the angels join. Heb. i. 6. What humiliation and grandeur meet in Jesus!

5. What wondrous *grace* appears in the incarnation of the Son of God! When man was lost and there was

no Saviour, the Son of God said, "Lo ! I come, to wear the nature of man, to bear his sins, and to die his death. I come to redeem my enemies from the hands of hell, and to restore them to God. Behold, what manner of love is this ! Love that knows no bounds, and passeth knowledge.—Yet, marvellous to relate, no sooner did he appear on the earth, than the children of men thirsted for his blood, and cried in furious malice, " This is the heir ! come, let us kill him." Even this could not quench his love, nor stop the progress of his plan of grace. Well then may it be said of the Saviour's love, " Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it."

II. The *preparations* for Christ's entering on his public ministry, are three.—The ministry of John the Baptist—The baptism of Christ—and his temptations from Satan in the wilderness.

1. The *ministry of John the Baptist*. He was the harbinger of Christ, sent before the face of Jehovah to prepare his way. John was a plain and faithful priest, who endured hardness and abounded in labours. He delivered his commission with great fidelity, and reproved even kings for their iniquity. He came in the power and spirit of Elias, and cried as the herald of Christ, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. He called on the proud Pharisees, and all ranks, to repent and flee from the wrath to come. He directed their attention to Jesus, saying, " behold the Lamb of God !"—" he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." John's work was to awake a careless world and point out the Saviour. When the Master appeared, the harbinger withdrew. When the Sun arose, the morning star vanished.

2. The next step of preparation was the *baptism of Christ*, which he received at the hands of John, and which was under the law. Christian baptism in the name of the Trinity was not yet instituted ; and this Christ never received,—Extraordinary events took place at the time he was baptized, which declared him to be the Son of God with power. The heavens were

opened, and the spirit of God lighted upon him, and the eternal Father cried, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Here was a glorious display of the eternal Trinity fulfilling distinct offices in the economy of man's salvation.

3. The third and last stage of preparation were the *temptations* of Christ from Satan in the wilderness. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Were ordinary ministers strangers to temptations, they would be ill qualified for their office. They must, like their Divine Master, be exercised with fiery trials, that they may know how to sympathize with those that are tempted. Jesus was led by the spirit of God into the field of temptation, to contend with the grand adversary of God and man. Jesus would know experimentally the uttermost of his people's conflicts; therefore all restraints were taken from Satan, and he went as far as his malice could go. He tempted the Son of God to distrust his Father, to murder himself, and to worship the Devil. Satan used all his subtlety for forty days, but had nothing in Christ, who resisted all temptations with scripture for our example. When the enemy was vanquished and fled, Angels came and ministered unto Jesus. After the storm comes the sunshine: the cross leads to the crown. The combat ended; but the triumphs of Christ will last always. Here end the preparations.

We have in the commencement of the history of Jesus enough to excite our admiration of his character, and to raise our expectations to the highest degree. Though Matthew only states in an artless manner plain matters of fact respecting Jesus; yet what astonishing facts they are! Seriously review his miraculous incarnation, the humility and dignity which attend his birth and baptism:—mark the testimony of his forerunner—his victories over Satan, and the honours which Angels pay him; and you will be convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour of the world and the Son of the Most High God.

III. *The ministry of Christ.*—We are here led to

consider how Christ employed his time and talents in fulfilling his offices of King, Priest, and Prophet. His life was as remarkable as his incarnation was miraculous, or his death beneficial. The world never saw a life so innocent and heavenly, so laborious and benevolent. The whole of it was spent in doing the will of God, and promoting the happiness of mankind. In no instance has Jesus neglected duty, misemployed talents, or lost an opportunity of doing good. Every act and moment of his life perfectly harmonized with the law of his God; and in him was no fault at all. It was not possible to do more or act better than he did. He was as holy and perfect on the earth, as he is glorious and exalted in the heavens.—The life of Jesus was spent chiefly in *preaching, praying, working miracles, giving private instructions to his disciples, and correcting the errors of his opponents.*

1. *Public preaching.*—A considerable portion of his time was spent in giving public instructions, though but few of his sermons are recorded. His sermon on the mount is given by Matthew at considerable length, and may be divided into four parts. (1.) He begins with the Beatitudes, and there describes the spiritual characters of his true disciples, and pronounces the inestimable blessings that belong to them. This he does in order to encourage and comfort them in trying times, to animate their spirits to endure persecution, and to be faithful in the cause of their God. This spiritual state and the divine blessings are inseparable. (2.) Jesus proceeds to expound part of the moral law, particularly the 3rd, 6th, and 7th commandments. In order to do away the false glosses of the Pharisees, who maintained that the law regarded only the outward conduct, Jesus proves that the law is spiritual, and that it has respect to the principle and dispositions of the heart, as well as the actions of the life. (3.) The third part of the sermon has reference to the manner that religious duties should be performed; where Christ strongly reprobates all hypocrisy, ostentation, and self-admiration, in the service and worship of God;

and shows that all must be done in a humble, holy, and self-denying way. (4.) Jesus concludes this admirable sermon with exhorting all his followers, to perform the duties of their holy religion; particularly to lay up treasures in heaven, to die to the world, and avoid anxious cares; to be sincere, forgiving, and just; to press into the kingdom, and to practise holiness in the fear of the Lord.

The divine Redeemer was every way *the most extraordinary preacher* the world ever saw. He was incessantly at his work, and spoke with that wisdom which astonished all that heard him, and which all his adversaries could not gainsay or resist—with arguments which confounded his most subtle enemies, and with a zeal which consumed himself. He spoke with such authority and power as proved his divine mission, and constrained his opponents to say, “Never man spake like this man.” His concern for perishing sinners was inexpressible. He warned, reproved, and counselled the unbelieving and disobedient. He addressed his sincere followers with the tenderest affection, and encouraged them under all their difficulties. To the weak in faith and the weary soul, his language is like ointment poured forth. He carried the lambs in his bosom, and the bruised reed he would not break. By his preaching he brought life and immortality to light; expounded the law to show us our need of a Saviour, and proclaimed his salvation by grace. His common manner of speaking was by parables.

2. A great part of the life of Jesus was spent in *prayer*. For this purpose he frequently retired into solitude, to the garden, the mountain, or the wilderness, that he might enjoy uninterrupted communion with his Father in secret. He spent whole nights in prayer with strong crying and tears—with such fervour and concern, that on one occasion he sweat great drops of blood. He prayed with entire submission to his Father’s will, and the Father heard him always. Every petition he ever asked was perfect, and nothing was denied him. He left us an example of devotion, and

delivered several parables to show the prevalence of prayer, and promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

3. The life of Jesus was also eminently distinguished by the multitude of stupendous *miracles* which he wrought. Isaiah prophesied that the Saviour of the world would work thesee great miracles—“ Your God will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” Isai. xxxv. 5, 6. The miracles of Christ must have been very numerous. He healed the sick of all the countries through which he travelled. Often were the plains around him covered with patients labouring under all manner of infirmities, pains and diseases. Every sufferer drew pity from him, but no malady baffled his skill. He bid all his patients to be whole of whatsoever disease they had; and it was instantly done at his command. Virtue went out of him and healed them all. Here is grandeur and greatness far surpassing that of earthly monarchs. They indeed have their numerous armies, their golden crowns, their thrones of state, and crowds of attendants of high rank. But Jesus exceeds in glory, in the midst of apparent meanness and poverty. He is surrounded with multitudes of sinners in a suffering condition, seeking and obtaining health and cure both for body and soul. He made the dumb to sing his praises, the lame to leap for joy, the blind to behold his glory, and the deaf to hear the wonders of his grace. This reflected greater honour upon him than if he had been surrounded with princes. It is true that he had not one servant to wait on him; yet health and sickness, life and death, took their orders from him. The winds and the waves were still at his command; and as soon as he said to the dead, Come forth, they were instantly alive. When he wished to make a feast for thousands, he had only to bless a few loaves, and there was enough for all; and at his will the water turns to wine. When he utters his curse on

a tree, it withers from the roots. He walks on the sea as on dry land, and legions of devils obey his mandates.—He who wrought all these miracles, in his own name, by his own power, and for his own glory, has given sufficient proof that he has power on earth to forgive sins, to heal souls, and to give them life eternal.

4. Besides preaching, praying, and working miracles, Jesus spent much of his time in communicating *private instruction* to his disciples. He discoursed frequently with them on the nature of the kingdom which he was about to establish, and which they but ill understood. He explained to them his parables, solved their difficulties, rectified their mistakes, and checked their ambition. He instructed them in his doctrines, and showed what manner of persons his disciples were to be in principle and practice, in sufferings and enjoyments. He repeatedly forewarned them of the heavy trials they were to endure, and prepared their minds to expect nothing from the unbelieving world, but hatred, persecution, and cruelty. He directed them how to carry themselves under all their sufferings, commanded them to be as lambs among wolves, meek and lowly of heart; and never to avenge themselves, but to return good for evil, and blessing for cursing. He warned them never to shun the cross, but to take it up and carry it patiently after him, according to their own engagements when they became his disciples. And for their encouragement he informed them, that the trials of their faith were highly beneficial and ordained of God; assuring them, that it was far better to suffer the loss of all things and to die for Christ, than to gain the whole world and incur the wrath of God by sinful compliances or cowardly conduct. He faithfully warned them to beware of false teachers, and pernicious doctrines; exhorted them to live by faith, looking forward to the resurrection and the glory to come. All the disciples of Jesus, to the end of the world, are deeply interested in these *private instructions* which he gave to his first followers.

5. The adversaries of Christ occupied much of his time in *disputations*. The chief of these were the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians.—The *Scribes* were Jewish teachers, who were also called Lawyers, and the most learned of them Doctors of the Law. They were of the Levites, and no distinct sect. In general they were Pharisees, and some of the proudest, bitterest enemies of Christ.—The *Pharisees* were a religious sect among the Jews, who made the highest pretensions of regard for the moral law of God, when they were wholly ignorant of its spiritual nature and requirements. They interpreted the law by the vain tradition of the Elders, which taught them to observe a thousand frivolous customs that drew them away from what the law actually required. These men were full of proud conceit, that they were high in God's favour by their strict observance of their own absurd inventions, while they neglected all spiritual obedience to the holy law. They honoured themselves, despised Christ, and rejected salvation by grace. The *Sadducees* formed another religious sect of Jews which adhered more strictly to the writings of Moses, than to the rest of the Scriptures, and interpreted them literally, continuing ignorant of their spiritual meaning. They denied the resurrection, and maintained that every man had a right to act according to his own will—that the soul died with the body, and that angels had no existence. Caiaphas and the rest of this sect were determined enemies of Christ.—Of the *Herodians* we know but little. They were probably not a religious sect, but a political party of superstitious idolaters who favoured the ambitious attempts of Herod to reign over Judea as well as over Galilee. These also were very hostile to Christ and his kingdom.

These adversaries of the Saviour frequently interrupted him in his ministry, and strove to entangle him with insnaring questions, which our Lord answered with such wisdom as silenced and confounded them. Jesus patiently endured their insulting conduct, manifested the tenderest solicitude for their welfare, warned

them of their dangar, and prayed the Father to forgive them. We should here observe, that in whatever work Christ was occupied, he invariably kept his one grand object in view—to finish the work which his Father had given him to do, to destroy the works of the devil, and to restore fallen sinners to holiness and heaven. In chap. xix. and xx. we have a most interesting narrative of Christ's last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, and what he did by the way. In chap. xxi—xxv. are recorded his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem; and his wonderful works, miracles, and sermons, in that city, before his trials came on.

IV. St Matthew concludes with the last *sufferings, death, and resurrection* of Jesus Christ.

1. The Saviour's last sufferings commence in the *conspiracy* formed against his life in the palace of the High Priest; where the Ecclesiastical Rulers consult how they may kill the Lord of Life, who offers them salvation.—While they deliberate, Judas enters and offers to betray Jesus into their hands for a sum of money, which he loves more than he does his Lord and Master.—Jesus, after he had been eating the Passover and instituting the Lord's Supper, retires with his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane to pray to his Father, which he does with inexpressible earnestness, and with such agony of spirit, that his body is covered with drops of blood. So severe is the conflict in this tremendous hour and power of darkness, that his “soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.”—Before he leaves the garden, Judas comes with his armed band to apprehend him. Jesus now submits, because it is his Father's will.—The soldiers bind him and lead him away to the palace of the High Priest, where his trial commences before Caiaphas. The Scribes and Elders charge him with blasphemy, because he acknowledges himself to be the Son of God and the true Messiah. They pronounce him worthy of death, when no guilt is found in him. The Judge of the whole earth is condemned at the bar of man.—They take Jesus from the ecclesiastical to the civil court to be tried at the bar

of Pilate the governor, where he has a long examination. Pilate is convinced of his innocence, yet against his conscience, to gratify the malice of the rulers and the fury of the mob, he delivers him up to be crucified. After he is scourged and abused, till covered with spitting, bruises, and blood, they convey him in triumph to the place of execution.

2. The Son of God *dies* on Calvary. In the way there, he is compelled to carry his cross, which he bears with meekness, though fainting with fatigue. When he sees a great company of friends following him weeping, he addresses them with the tenderest pity, and saith, “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me.”—They nail him to the cross; mock him in his dying hour with a crown of thorns, and give him gall to drink. His blood distils from his mangled body, and tremendous darkness fills his soul. Was there sorrow like unto his sorrow! Yet in the midst of these unparalleled sufferings he cries aloud, “ Father, forgive them.” This is recorded for our example.

Behold at one view the *glory* and the *torments* of the cross of Christ. Behold the Redeemer of the world suspended between earth and heaven, naked, bleeding, forlorn! A spectacle of wonder to angels, though the scorn of men. What dignity and humility meet in a crucified Saviour! The highest of beings is in the lowest state of woe. The Lord of glory dies for man. The same Jesus wears the crown of glory and the crown of thorns. The hand that sways the sceptre of the universe is mocked with a reed. The arms that stretched out the heavens are stretched on the ignominious cross. The lips which called the dead to life, close in death. But, great as his bodily sufferings were, yet were they as nothing to the agony of his soul burning in the furnace of his father’s wrath, to deliver man from eternal death.

What has Jesus *accomplished* on the cross? He made his soul a sacrifice for sin, and by the one sacrifice of himself made a full and perfect atonement for the sins of the whole world. He died for us in our law

place. He opened a door of mercy before a fallen world, and the door of heaven unto all believers. He obtained a complete victory over sin, death, and hell, and opened a new and living way for us to return to God. He brought in an everlasting righteousness, and finished the work which his Father had given him to do.—Jesus in dying had gracious *ends* in view. He sinks in death, that we may rise to life eternal. He is clothed with our shame, that we may be arrayed with the robe of his righteousness. He drinks the wormwood and the gall, that we may drink of the rivers of his pleasures for evermore. He is forsaken that we may be owned of God. He bears the weight of sin and sorrow, that we may have the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. He endures tremendous darkness, that we may dwell in the light of life through an eternal day. He wears a crown of prickly thorns, that we may wear the brilliant crown of glory. The Son of God dies on the ignominious cross, that the sons of men may reign with him on his glorious throne, and be for ever with the Lord.

What *effects* should all this have on our hearts and lives? Surely we should love the Lord with all our souls, who hath loved us even unto death. We should believe in such a Saviour without wavering, trust in him without doubting, seek him without weariness, hope in him without fear of disappointment, delight in him supremely, and praise him always. Surely the cross of Christ should kill in us the love of sin, and kindle in us the love of holiness. It should draw our hearts away from lying vanities to the living God, and bind us to his service for ever. We should be crucified to the world, and live to him who died for us. If we are not in some good degree thus influenced by the cross of Christ, we are not saved by it. Let us look to Jesus and live.

3. On the third day early on the sabbath, Jesus *rose from the dead*. “The Lord is risen indeed,” and saith, “I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen! and have the keys of

hell and of death." "Death hath no more dominion over him." "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." In vain the guard, the seal, the stone. The bands of death could not confine the Prince of Life. He rose triumphant, and to live for ever. He rose by his own power, which proves his conquests and his Godhead. He rose for glorious purposes, to raise us from death in sin unto a life of righteousness, to take possession of the kingdom, to prepare a place for us, and to secure our resurrection. He rose to plead his blood before his Father's throne, and he ever liveth to make intercession for us. He rose to send his Spirit down to prepare and conduct his children home to heaven. Jesus will come in the last day to call his children from the grave, and to present them to his Father all arrayed in spotless robes made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus, after his resurrection, *spent forty days* on the earth, and conversed freely and frequently with his disciples; gave them instructions, comfort, and encouragement; appointed to meet them on a mountain in Galilee, where he talked much with them on the affairs of his kingdom, and doubtless established their future plans. To strengthen their faith he declares to them, that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. He seals afresh the high commission of his apostles, and saith unto them, "Go ye into all the world, and ~~preach~~ teach the gospel unto every creature," and baptize all that shall receive your testimony, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." At length the Divine Saviour concludes all with saying for their encouragement, "And lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." "He lift up his hands and blessed them. And while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Matthew, which signifies *a Gift*, and is in Hebrew called Levi, the son of Alpheus, was born at Nazareth, a Jew, and was by profession a publican, or collector

of taxes for the Romans, by the sea of Galilee ; a calling that was reckoned infamous among the Jews. From thence Jesus called him early to be his disciple, and afterwards ordained him one of his twelve apostles. Matthew accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his ministry till he was taken up into heaven, and was therefore a competent witness of what he recorded. As far as appears, he continued to preach for some years in Judea, and wrote the gospel about eight or nine years after the death of Jesus, in Greek, for the use of the universal church, and was afterwards translated into Hebrew for the particular use of the Jews at Jerusalem, to convince them that Jesus was the long-promised Messiah, the son of David and of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed. What became of Matthew after he wrote the gospel is not certain ; some say that he went to preach in Ethiopia, and suffered martyrdom. Be that as it may, it is enough for us to know that the gospel which he wrote is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which we must believe, or lose the kingdom and perish for ever.

ST. MARK.

The Order and leading Subjects of the Gospel by this Evangelist.

St. MARK's gospel may be divided into three parts.—1. A brief account of John's ministry ; the baptism and temptations of Christ.—2. From chap. i. 14. to chap. xiv. the public ministry of Christ ; his journeys, doctrines, and miracles.—3. His last sufferings, death, and resurrection, chap. xiv—xvi.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. John's ministry : Christ's baptism and temptations : Jesus begins to preach, to call disciples, and to work miracles.
2. He heals the palsy, forgives sins, and vindicates himself.
3. He heals many, flees from the Pharisees, chooses his apostles, confutes the Sadducees, and shows who are dearest to him.
4. The parable of the sower : of the seed growing and ripening : of the grain of mustard seed. Christ stilling the tempest.
5. He casts out the legion, heals the issue, raises Jairus's daughter.
6. Jesus preaches and sends apostles : John is killed : Jesus heals multitudes, walks on the sea, lands at Gennesaret.
7. Of unwashen hands : the Syrophenician : the deaf and dumb.
8. Jesus feeds multitudes : warns against the leaven of the Pharisees : gives sight to the blind : reprobates Peter.
9. Christ's transfiguration : his testimony of John : he casts out a dumb spirit : predicts his own death : gives divers admonitions.
10. Of divorces : of young children : and of the dangers of riches. Christ foretells his death, reproves ambition, and gives sight to Bartimeus.
11. Christ rides to Jerusalem, kills the fig-tree, and purifies the temple.
12. The vineyard. Jesus disputes with the Herodians and the Pharisees, &c.
13. The destruction of the temple : the end of the world : the barren fig-tree.
14. Jesus is betrayed, apprehended, forsaken, and condemned.
15. Jesus is condemned by Pilate : is crucified and buried.
16. Jesus rises from the dead, and ascends into heaven.

... *Observation: on St. Mark.*

I. With a view to assist the young reader to recollect the arrangement of the gospel by St. Mark, I would divide it into these *eight sections*.

1. From the beginning of *John's ministry* to the beginning of Christ's ministry. Chap. i. to ver. 14.—Mark begins with the preaching and character of the Baptist, who prepares the way of the Lord. Then follows the preparations for Christ's ministry, his baptism, unction, temptations, and fasting.

2. From the commencement of *Christ's ministry*, to the ordination of the apostles. Chap. i—iii. to ver. 13.

Jesus begins to preach in Galilee ; calls four of his disciples, teaches in the synagogue at Capernaum ; heals many diseases, and casts out devils. Jesus preaches in the synagogues throughout all Galilee, and works miracles wherever he goes. He calls more disciples, and defends them against the Pharisees, who seek to kill him ; he flees from them to the sea, and multitudes follow him.

3. From the *ordination of the Apostles*, till Christ sends them forth. Chap. iii—v.—Jesus ordains and names his twelve apostles. Multitudes flock to him. He reproves the Scribes for blasphemy, and shows who are his relations. Jesus preaches out of a ship, and delivers the parable of the sower ; of the candles ; of the seed growing ; of the mustard seed, &c. After this, he calms the tempest ; dispossesses the legion . heals the issue of blood ; raises Jairus's daughter, and goes to his own country.

4. From the time Jesus *sends forth his Apostles*, to the time he leaves Galilee for the last time. Chap. vi—ix.—Jesus sends forth the apostles to preach and to work miracles. The great fame of Jesus terrifies Herod, whose conduct towards the Baptist is described. Jesus feeds five thousand ; walks on the sea ; comes to Nazareth ; disputes with the Pharisees ; teaches the people and his disciples, and works many miracles. He foretells his own death and resurrection, for which Peter rebukes him : he ~~represents Peter, and~~ his disciples self-denial. Christ is transfigured. He speaks of Elias, and of his own death. He teaches his disciples, and shows how dear they are to him ; the danger of offending them ; their duty to cut off their dearest sins ; to have salt in themselves, and peace one with another.

5. From the time Jesus *leaves Galilee* till he enters Jerusalem. Chap. x.—In his journey towards Jerusalem he disputes with the Pharisees about divorce ; blesses little children ; instructs the rich young man ; and shows that his disciples must forsake all things to follow him. Jesus foretells his own death ; rebukes

the ambition of James and John, and teaches them not to seek pre-eminence, but to prepare for the cross. Near Jericho, Jesus gives sight to Bartimeus.

6. From the time Jesus *enters Jerusalem* till the conspiracy against his life. Chap. xi—xiii.—Jesus enters Jerusalem with loud Hosannas ; destroys the barren fig-tree ; purifies the temple ; shows the power of faith, and justifies his own conduct.—Jesus by the parable of the vineyard foretells the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, which stir up the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and Scribes to dispute with him. Christ warns his hearers against the pride, avarice, and hypocrisy of the Pharisees : and commends the poor widow. Jesus prophesies of the misery and destruction coming on Jerusalem, and of his coming to judgment ; and strongly urges them to prepare for his coming.

7. From the *conspiracy against Christ's life* to his death and burial. Chap. xiv, xv.—The chief Priests and Scribes conspire against the life of Christ ; the woman anoints him ; Judas agrees to betray him. Jesus eats the last passover with his disciples ; institutes the Lord's Supper ; and the whole is concluded with a hymn. Jesus forewarns his disciples that they would all forsake him. He prays in the garden where Judas betrays him. Jesus is apprehended, accused of blasphemy and condemned by the High Priest, and delivered Jesus bound to Pilate, by whom he is examined. He is accused by the Priests, rejected by the people, scourged by the officers, and delivered up by Pilate to be crucified. The cruelty of the people, the love of the Saviour, the sufferings of the cross, the signs and wonders which appeared in heaven and earth, while the Son of God was bleeding on the tree, are described in a very pathetic and affecting manner. When Jesus was dead, Joseph laid his sacred body in his own tomb.

8. The *resurrection and ascension* of the Son of God. Chap. xvi. The angels publish his resurrection. Jesus appears to Mary ; then to the eleven apostles, to whom he gives a general commission to preach the gospel to

all nations, and to administer the sacraments. Jesus was then received into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

II. A brief account of this Evangelist, and of the occasion of his writing the gospel of Christ, &c.

1. St. Mark was of the tribe of Levi, the line of Priests ; his personal name was John, who was surnamed Mark. He was son of that Mary at whose house they prayed when the angel brought Peter out of prison, and was first cousin to Barnabas. John Mark is thought to have been one of the seventy disciples, who was afterwards made one of the evangelists. These evangelists were not apostles, yet were they apostolical men, extraordinary officers, the companions and coadjutors of the apostles, who were sent by them to confirm and nourish the churches which they themselves had planted. St. Mark travelled with St. Paul and Barnabas in their first journey among the Gentiles. Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus ; but we find him afterwards assisting St. Paul when prisoner under Nero. Paul highly commends him, and saith, "He is profitable to me for the ministry." And, as far as appears, Mark was for a considerable time the companion and helper of St. Peter in his travels, and was sent by him to preach both to Jews and Gentiles, and styles him, "Marcus my son." It is evident that Mark was the fellow traveller of these three, Barnabas, Peter, and Paul ; and being an evangelist, he must have possessed the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. St. Mark after this, crossed the Mediterranean sea, to preach the Gospel to the churches of Alexandria in Egypt, where he was blessed with very remarkable success. Soon after his arrival, multitudes embrace the faith, and were won by the heavenly life of this evangelist. After continuing some time at Alexandria, he left it, to preach the gospel and work miracles in other parts of Africa, and God abundantly blessed his labours. He returned to Alexandria, was appointed Bishop, continued to labour and to prosper in a very extraordinay manner, which at length drew upon him the fury of the barbarous idolaters of that country. One day,

about Easter, when they were celebrating the praises of *Seraphis* their chief Idol, the multitude entered the church in a tumultuous manner, seized St. Mark at his devotion, bound him, and dragged him through the streets till his strength was exhausted with the loss of blood. They confined him in a lonesome prison, where, as some say, the Lord appeared and conversed with him. The next day they brought him out of prison, and dragged him about the streets till his life was gone. While his body was thus barbarously treated by his unfeeling murderers, his soul ascended to the joy of his Lord, "Where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

2. The learned agree that St. Mark wrote his gospel at the request of the Christians at Rome; doubtless by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Rome was at that time the most famous city in the world, where men of all nations resorted, for the purpose of commerce, learning, and religion. St. Paul, with his fellow-labourers, one of whom was Mark, had nourished the church there, which at length became numerous and flourishing. It was composed chiefly of Gentile converts, with many believing Jews. St. Matthew wrote the gospel chiefly for the Jews, and Luke for the Gentiles; but Mark for both indiscriminately: he therefore has fewer national peculiarities than either of them. *The gospel hv Mark is a short, compendious narrative, designed for the use of Christians without distinction.* He begins abruptly with the ministry of the Baptist, and proceeds to record only the public life of Christ, and to relate how he fulfilled his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices. Mark arranges the acts of the Saviour more methodically than either Matthew or Luke, and contains more matter within less compass. It is more like a journal than a history. He records a long series of the actions of Christ, which he states in a short way, but does not give his sermons and conversations at any length. Mark wrote the gospel in Greek, at Rome, about two years later than St. Matthew, and fifteen years after Christ's ascension into heaven.

ST. LUKE.

The Order and leading Subjects of the Gospel by this Evangelist.

THE Preface. Gabriel's message to Zacharias, and to Mary. The birth of John and of Jesus. Christ begins his public ministry in Galilee; then at Nazareth; at Capernaum; on the plain; at Nain; in every city and village; in his last journey to Jerusalem, and in that city. The history concludes with the last sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Gabriel's message to Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary : Mary's visit to Elizabeth : the birth of John : the prophecy of Zacharias.
2. The birth of Christ : the Angel's song : the Shepherd's visit : Simeon and Anna's prophecy : of the youth of Christ.
3. John's ministry : Christ's baptism.
4. Christ's temptations : his ministry through all Galilee.
5. Drawing of the twelve called : the leper, and paralytic : eating with sinners : debating about the sabbath.
6. The sabbath : the apostles called : many healed : exorcisms, woes : Christian tempers : ministerial qualifications : builders.
7. The centurion's servant : the widow's son : the messengers of John : the man whose great sins were pardoned.
8. Christ preaching—parable of the sower—lighted candle : miracle of the loaves—legion—issue—Jairus's daughter.
9. The apostles' mission—feeds the multitude—foretells his death—teaches—people—transfigured, reproves the zeal of John.

CHAP.

10. The seventy sent out: woes against Chorazin, &c.: who are taught of God: the lawyer's enquiry: the good Samaritan.
11. Encouragement to pray: of ascribing miracles to Beelzebub: the blessedness of piety: the Pharisees exposed.
12. Instructions how to preach: to avoid covetousness, and anxious cares: the faithful and wise steward.
13. Repentance: the barren fig tree: a woman healed: the mustard seed: the strait gate: of Herod: of Jerusalem.
14. Of humility and hospitality: the great supper: of self-denial and deadness to the world, to be Christ's disciples.
15. Parables of the lost sheep, piece of silver, prodigal son.
16. The unjust steward: the pride of Pharisees: the rich man and Lazarus.
17. To avoid giving offence: the ten lepers: the kingdom of God.
18. The importunate widow: the Pharisee and Publican: children brought to Christ: all to be left for his sake: blind.
19. Of Zaccheus: of the nobleman: Jesus enters Jerusalem.
20. Christ's authority: the vineyard: tribute: the resurrection.
21. Destruction of the temple and city: signs of the last day.
22. Christ eats the passover, institutes the Lord's supper, instructs his disciples: is betrayed, insulted, and condemned.
23. Jesus before Pilate and Herod—condemned and crucified.
24. Christ's resurrection—commission to the Apostles—ascension.

Observations on St. Luk .

1. Luke wrote the gospel of Jesus Christ in a full ~~and~~ which, for the assistance of the ~~and~~, ~~and~~ these ten sections.

1. *Before the birth of Christ*.—The message of Gabriel to Zacharias; his tiding salutations of Elizabeth, and Mary's song. The birth of John, and Zacharias's prophecy.

2. *The birth and private life of Christ*.—His birth is proclaimed by the angels, by the shepherds. He is circumcised and presented at the temple. The prophecy of Simeon and of Anna. Jesus disputes with the doctors in the temple.

3. *The preparations for Christ's public ministry*.—Chap. iii.—The ministry of John preparing the way

of the Lord. The baptism of Jesus. His temptations, fastings, and prayers in the wilderness.

4. The commencement of Christ's public ministry, till he calls his apostles. Chap. iv—vi, to ver. 12.—Jesus begins to preach and to work miracles in Galilee; then at Nazareth, his native place, where the people reject him; at Capernaum, and at the lake of Gennesareth, where he calls Peter, James, and John. He returns to Capernaum, his own city, and heals the paralytic; goes to Levi's house, and excuses his disciples from several charges brought against them. He heals the withered hand.

5. Jesus chooses his twelve Apostles, and proceeds with his work. Chap. vi—viii.—He spent a whole night in prayer on a mountain near Capernaum, and on the next morning ordained the twelve apostles. When they descended to the foot of the mountain, he delivered to the multitude what is called the Sermon on the Mount. At Capernaum, Jesus heals the Centurion's servant. At Nain he raises the widow's son, and converses about John the Baptist. At the Pharisee's house, the woman washes his feet. Jesus, attended all the way by the twelve, goes through every city and village; and in preaching delivers the parable of the sower, and of the candle. He sails over the lake of Gennesareth, calms the tempest, casts out the legion, cures the issue of blood, and raises Jairus's daughter.

6. Jesus sends forth his twelve apostles to preach the gospel, and to heal the sick. Chap. x. to ver. 50.—The twelve apostles go out, and report their success. Jesus takes them into a desert near Bethsaida, instructs and feeds the multitude, and converses privately with his disciples. He tells them of his death and resurrection; warns and comforts them. The transfiguration on Tabor.

7. Jesus's journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. Chap. ix. ver. 13—xix. ver. 28.—The Samaritans reject him. The apostles desire to take revenge. Jesus rebukes them, and sends his disciples before him, who

return, and report their success with joy. He instructs the enquiring lawyer, reproves anxious Mary, and teaches his disciples to pray. He casts out a devil. Some blaspheme, to whom he denies a sign. In his sermon at the Pharisee's house, he sharply rebukes the Scribes, Pharisees, and lawyers. In his sermon to the disciples, he warns them against the Pharisees, and encourages them to proceed with their work. In his sermon, occasioned by one asking him to divide the inheritance, he teaches his disciples a variety of important lessons. In his sermon about the Galileans, he exhorts to repentance and to fruitfulness. He cures the woman that was bowed down, and shows to what the kingdom of heaven is like. He preaches all the way as he journeys towards Jerusalem. He exhorts to enter in at the strait gate, reproves Herod, upbraids Jerusalem, delivers the parable of the great supper, and instructs his disciples how they are to follow him. In his sermon to publicans and sinners, he shows the joy of heaven at the conversion of a sinner, by the parable of the lost sheep, of the lost money, and of the lost son, chap. xv.—In his sermon to the disciples and to the Pharisee, he teaches them deadness to the world, by the parable of the unjust steward, and that of the rich man. And in his instructions to the elect, he encourages them always to pray, by the parable of the

and by that of the Pharisee

and shows how his kingdom journey must have taken up a long time is more full in his account of it than the Evangelists.

8. Jesus enters *Jerusalem* in triumph, chap. xix, ver. 28, to chap. xxii.—As soon as he enters the city, he wears over it. He purges the and preaches in it daily. He delivers the parable of the vineyard, to show the destruction that is coming upon the Priests and Scribes; disputes with the about paying

ascension of Jesus. The first three evangelists give but a very short account of what Jesus did during the first two years of his public ministry. They record chiefly his sermons and miracles in the year next before his crucifixion. St. John alone gives the history of the two first years of Christ's ministry.

4. St. Luke wrote his gospel in Greek, and seems to have intended it more especially for the use of the Gentile converts. It is, however, composed much in the same strain with that of Matthew, who had written for Jewish converts, as the same instructions and the same remedy are necessary for sinners in general, whether Jews or Gentiles. The gospel of the kingdom is for all nations, and that Jesus which it exhibits, is to be for salvation to the ends of the earth. St. Luke's manner of writing is accurate, methodical, and full. His style is classical, sublime, and perspicuous. As a writer, he is by far the most elegant and learned of the evangelists. At what time he wrote his gospel is not certain; the most probable opinion is, that it was some years after St. Mark, and about eighteen years after Christ's ascension. Some give it a later date.

ST. JOHN.

The Order and principal subjects of the Gospel by this Evangelist.

~~Firstly,~~ the person of Christ, who is by nature both God and man, full of grace and truth; and by office, the Mediator between God and man. Chap. i.—Secondly, On the manner in which Jesus executed his mediatorial office during the four eminent journeys which he took to Jerusalem to attend the great festivals, especially the passover. Chap. ii—xiii. Thirdly, The private and most important instructions which Jesus gave to his disciples immediately after eating the last

passover and instituting the Lord's supper, to prepare their sorrowful hearts for his departure ; and the extraordinary prayer which he offered up for himself and them. Chap. xiv—xvii.—Fourthly, The last trials, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus. Chap. xviii—xxi.

Or, in a short way, thus :—1. St. John tells us, in a few words, who Christ is.—2. He then proceeds at great length to adduce many testimonies, facts, and miracles in proof of what he asserts of Christ.—3. He concludes with a short historical narrative of the character he draws.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The godhead and manhood of Christ : his offices, graces, and fulness : the Baptist bears witness of him : disciples called.
2. Jesus turns the water into wine in Cana : goes to Capernaum, and then to Jerusalem, where he purges the temple.
3. Nicodemus taught of Christ : the love of God in giving his Son : the necessity of believing in him : the Baptist's testimony of Christ.
4. Christ's conversation with the woman of Samaria : his delight in his work : he returns to Cana : heals the nobleman's son.
5. Jesus heals at Bethesda : his defence against the Pharisees.
6. Five thousand fed : the storm at sea : carnal hearts reproved : Christ the bread of life : many offended : defence.
7. Jesus comes up to the mount : his doctrines in the temple : divers pride of the Pharisees.
at the " defends
8. The ~~un~~ received by Christ.
9. Jesus the Door—the Shepherd from the Jews. on : flees
10. Jesus raises Lazarus : a council against Caiaphas's prophecy.
11. Jesus's defence of Mary : rides to Jerusalem to works there.
12. Jesus washes his ~~people's~~ feet : into Judas : Christ's exhortation to love one another : turning to Peter.
13. ~~He~~ ~~the~~ the way, the truth, and the promises : promises them the Holy Ghost : give ~~to~~.
14. The vine and the branches : to ardent love by his own example ; and to from all the world.
15. Jesus promises the Comforter in tribulation.
16. Jesus promises the Comfor-

CHAP.

17. Jesus's extraordinary prayer, and his parting blessing.
18. Jesus is apprehended, tried by Caiaphas and Pilate, denied by Peter.
19. Christ is shamefully abused, crucified, and buried.
20. He appears unto Mary, and to the disciples : Thomas's unbelief.
21. Jesus appears again to his disciples : his conversation with Peter.

Observations on St. John.

I. The gospel by this Evangelist may be analyzed and divided in the following manner.

First, Of the glorious *person and offices* of Jesus.
Chap. i.

1. His *Godhead* is proved by his eternal existence, and his all-creating power; by his being the fountain of grace, and the light of the world; and by his making all the regenerate the sons of God.—His real manhood is also proved, by his tabernacling among us.

2. His *Mediatorial Offices*, as Prophet, Priest, and King, are set forth by the Baptist, who points to him as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” and declares him to be the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, What Jesus did as Mediator in his *four eminent journeys to Jerusalem to attend the Passover and other festivals*. Chap. ii.

1. *The first Passover* Chap. ii. —iv.—Before he attended this, he had called some disciples, and turned the water into wine at a marriage in Cana. He went to Capernaum, and from thence to Jerusalem for the passover. While there, he purges the temple, works miracles on the last day, and preacheth to Nicodemus on the new birth. Jesus returneth through Judea, and recealeth honourable t...ohn. He goes through Samaria, preaches to Jacob's well, and converts many of the Samaritans. From thence he returns to Cana, and to Capernaum, where he heals the nobleman's son.

2. *The second Passover.* Chap. v. vi.—Jesus attends this in the second year of his ministry. In his way thither from Capernaum, nothing is recorded till he comes to Bethesda, where he heals a man that had the palsy for thirty-eight years, to prove his divine mission against the cavils of the Pharisees. In returning, Jesus feeds five thousand, walks on the sea, preaches a sermon at Capernaum, to show that he is the bread of life, and the giver of life eternal.

3. *The feast of Tabernacles.* Chap. vii—x, to verse 21.—Jesus goes up privately to this feast. Divers opinions are formed of him. About the middle of the feast he preaches in the temple, proves his divine mission, and threatens to leave the Jews. On the last day of the feast he delivers another sermon, inviting all to drink of the water of life, and his doctrine overcomes the officers sent to take him. Chap. vii. Next morning he instructs the people, and confounds his adversaries. He declares himself to be the light of the world, and proves the Pharisees to be the children of the devil. Chap. viii. On the sabbath, he cures the man born blind, and rebukes the Jews for their blindness. Chap. ix. In another sermon, he declares himself to be the Door, and the true Shepherd, which he illustrates by the parable of the sheep and the shepherds. Chap. x,

— 91 —

“¹ invitation in winter. Chap. x, ver.

“² to be the Christ.

“³ and flees

“⁴ is

at Bethany, and
that Jesus shall die for the
the wilderness of Ephraim.

5. *The last Passover.* Chap. xii. —Farther account of Lazarus and Mary. Jesus Jerusalem, and delivers a remarkable sermon. xii. Jesus chal supper with his ; washes their each them humility, need of spiritual thing. He detects Judas, his disciples to love one another, and forewarns his fall. Chap. xiii.

Thirdly, The *private and important instructions* which Jesus gives to his disciples, between the last passover and his final sufferings, to comfort them in their sorrow at his departure. Chap. xiv—xvii.

1. Jesus describes Heaven, which he promiseth to his disciples, and shows that he himself is the way to glory. He assures them that they shall do wonders in his name, receive answers to their prayers, and have his Spirit for their comforter. He gives them his peace as his parting blessing. Chap. xiv.

2. Jesus exhorts his disciples to abide in him by faith, which union he illustrates by the parable of the Vine and its Branches: to abound in spiritual fruitfulness, especially in love to one another. He forewarns them that the world will hate and persecute them after his departure; and he comforts them by showing their relation to himself, and the goodness of their cause: and especially by promising to send the Comforter to them. Chap. xv.

3. Jesus proceeds to warn his disciples of the world's hatred, and of his approaching departure, which fills them with sorrow. He promises to send down the Holy Ghost to comfort them, to convince the world of sin, and to give them the victory over the world. Chap. xvi.

4. When Jesus had finished all these sayings to his disciples, he lifts up his soul to heaven, ~~and~~, with his most heavenly *prayer*, ~~as the great High Priest~~ of his people, ~~before God offers himself for them~~. He prays the Father to glorify him, as his work on earth is finished. ~~He prays that his~~ apostles may be sanctified and ~~free from~~ all evil. He prays that all believers may be ~~united~~ unto God and to one another, and be eternally ~~united~~ with himself in his kingdom above. Chap. xvii.

Fourthly, ~~The trials, death, and resurrection of Jesus.~~ Chap. xviii—xix.

1. His last *sufferings and death*.—In the garden he was betrayed, apprehended, and led away to the high priest's palace, where he was examined by Caiaphas, abused by

an officer, and denied by Peter. They bring him before Pilate, where he is accused, tried, and rejected. He is scourged, crowned with thorns, clothed with a mock robe, and condemned to die, contrary to Pilate's conscience. **JESUS DIES ON CALVARY.** Chap. xviii, xix.

2. The *resurrection* of Jesus Christ. Mary comes to the sepulchre, sees two angels, converses with Jesus, and runs to tell his disciples. Jesus comes to the chamber where the disciples are assembled, and endues them with power from on high for the work of the ministry. After eight days he visits them again, and removes Thomas's unbelief. Again, he shows himself unto them at the sea of Tiberias, and dines with them. After dinner he holds a private conference with Peter. Chap. xx, xxi.

II. It will be seen from the above sketch, that the gospel by St. John has many transcendent excellencies above the writings of the other three Evangelists.

1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, write chiefly of the Human nature and Mediation of Christ, recording indeed events which plainly declare his Divine nature. But John writes professedly of the Godhead of the Saviour. The other evangelists begin with his incarnation and earthly pedigree; but John commences with his eternal generation and existence before the world.

that Jesus is the Creator of heaven and
most part on what Christ
after
the wise, the history of
ministry. They speak of things as
confine their narrative to the birth, death
of Jesus; but John soars aloft, ^{waves} sun with
undazzled eyes, ^{o.} leads us
soul ^{sub} amidst of the
of sub-^{sequence, pours}
"found my ^{They all write}
avour than John, ^{ed on his Master's}
usom, and drank deep in ^{loving spirit. He}

breathes through his whole gospel the very spirit of grace, and speaks of the mysteries of Christ in torrents of love.

2. St. John is much more *doctrinal* than the other evangelists. They write rather as biographers, and enter less into the grand doctrines of Christ, and the offices of the Holy Ghost. They are all on one plan, and record principally the transactions of Christ on earth: but John tells us who Christ is, and fully states his doctrines. John repeats but little of what the other evangelists record, but introduces a great deal which they have omitted; and what they have but just touched upon, is brought forward by him in a prominent manner. Great part of John's writing is entirely new. From the middle of chap. vi. to the end of chap. xii. all is so: chap. xiv—xvii. are nearly so; likewise, chap. xx. xxi. Some of the points which St. John alone dwells upon, are the following:—the glory of the person of Christ, and his priestly office; the offices of the Holy Ghost; the new creation of the soul; the life of faith; union with Jesus; the fulfilment of the types of Christ; the world to come. What Christ did on earth after his resurrection is also more fully stated by John than by any other.

III. Short account of *St. John*, and of the occasion of his writing his gospel.

1. St. John was son of Zebedee and Salome, and born at Bethesda in Galilee. He had a brother James, nearly his equal in talents and in occupation a fisherman. He was a disciple of the Baptist, and then of Jesus, to be a disciple of Christ, and afterwards one of his apostles. He was confessedly the first of the evangelists for amiableness and talents, though the rest of all the apostles. He lived about seven years after Christ's ascension.

John was very dear to the Lord and Saviour for his superius talents and endowments, and called "The disciple whom Jesus loved." High honour were conferred on him above the rest. He leaned on Jesus's breast at the last supper, was with him on

Mount Tabor and in Gethsemane, and was the only apostle that stood by the cross; and to him Jesus committed the care of his mother. He was the first at the grave of Christ, and was constantly with him during the forty days he continued on earth.

St. John tarried at Jerusalem preaching to the Jews for several years. He was there till the mother of Jesus was dead, fifteen years after Christ's ascension.—He afterwards went to Asia Minor, where he planted many churches which became of great note; namely, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others. But his residence was chiefly at Ephesus, where St. Paul had established an extensive and very flourishing church, over which district or diocese he had appointed Timothy bishop.

The apostle St. John was exceedingly laborious and successful in Asia, for which he was accused to Domitian as a subverter of the religion of the empire. He was sent for to Rome and cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but was miraculously delivered. He was banished to Patmos, a desolate island in the Archipelago, where he continued a few years and wrote the book of The Revelation. When Domitian was dead and the persecution over, St. John returned to Ephesus and regulated the affairs of that extensive district, after Timothy was martyred by the heathens.

² The most probable account of the occasion of St. John's "going."—Grievous accusations were made against the Christian Church, respecting the divine nature of Christ, and his Godhead, and others his manhood. To confute the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied his divine nature, and the monstrous heresy of the Nicolaitans before them, St. John proves his divine nature in his epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, &c. in which St. John also often refers to the epistles of St. Paul. In his epistle to the Ephesians, he says, "Unto the world, saith the Lord, I have given you a body to the apostle John." The world entreated him

to give to the world a full account of the person, offices, and doctrines of Christ; that St. John caused them to proclaim a general fast throughout all the churches, to implore the blessing of God on this solemn undertaking; and that the Holy Ghost descended on him in an extraordinary degree, which caused him to break out in those memorable words,—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” and to proceed till he completed the whole narrative.

St. John was called the Evangelical Trumpet, and the Son of Thunder; and he is supposed to have preached the gospel for sixty-five years. It is evident that he wrote his gospel towards the close of life, after the destruction at Jerusalem, and after his return from Patmos to Ephesus. It was written in Greek, and translated into Hebrew. John died a natural death, when he was about a hundred years old. He is now with his beloved Lord, leaning on the bosom of his love, where he will eternally celebrate the praises of the Lamb that was slain.

GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS.

WE shall now consider the writings of the four evangelists as containing a complete gospel, which contains all things necessary for salvation. The important truths which we are to learn are not arranged in a regular system, but interwoven with the whole history. Some of the great truths of the gospel, which we must study, are the following:

1. *The glory and mission of Christ.*—This above all things should be our chief study, as our views are of his person, so will they be of every doctrine connected

with him. As we view the fountain, so shall we view the streams. Jesus is the true God who hath all power in heaven and earth; who forgives sins, and gives eternal life from himself. He is man also, made in all things like unto his brethren, sin only excepted. Jesus is Immanuel, God in the flesh. Here we must not only have correct sentiments, but we must believe with the heart in the Son of God.

2. *The offices of Jesus Christ.*—He is King, Priest, and Prophet. In these offices he stands as the Mediator between God and man, in order to reconcile them together. He has engaged to redeem the world, to bring salvation down, to raise his church, to destroy the reign of Satan, to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and to judge the world. Great pains should be taken to understand the character and offices of the Saviour. Ignorance here is death.

3. *The manner in which Christ fulfilled his offices.*—This also we are to learn in the gospel, where the whole is faithfully recorded. His whole heart was in his work: it was his meat and drink. Nothing could divert his attention, no difficulties could deter him. Not one thing was omitted, not a moment lost, till the whole was finished. He fulfilled the whole law, made perfect atonement, and wrought out a well-finished salvation. To mark the manner in which Christ did

is of vast importance.

Christ procured for us.—The

and shows

salvation or Jesus
all sins and sufferings; from the wr
the torments of etc
the soul to the
do life, re
of od, constitut
ith every bless
ision is all-sufficient
5. *The glorious offic
Ghost.*—We derive

equal benefits from the offices of the Holy Spirit in salvation, as we do from those of the Son of God in redemption. The Son does all for us, the Holy Spirit does all in us, in order to eternal life. Jesus redeemed us, and purchased all blessings for us. The Holy Ghost creates our hearts anew, and puts us in possession of those blessings. It is the Holy Spirit that gives life to the soul, and nourishes that life : it is he that guides into all truth, bestows every grace, and guides the soul to glory. The Holy Ghost is the new Creator, Sanctifier, and Comforter of all the saints. He dwelleth in them, and shall abide with them for ever. The offices, operations, and fruits of the Spirit, should be studied with great attention ; and unless they are experienced they can profit us nothing.

6. The *new character* which the gospel forms when it is cordially believed, and the *benefits* which believers derive from it. The gospel of Jesus communicates all instructions necessary to salvation : it forms quite a new and a holy character : it transforms into the likeness of Jesus : it inspires hope of pardon in the regions of guilt and despair : it raises from death to life, and from darkness to light. It makes all things new. The believer no longer lives to himself, but to the God who saves him by grace. Where the gospel produces no such effects, and forms no such character, it is not cordially believed, and the soul is not saved. The gospel of Jesus is of immense value to us in our pilgrimage through this world, and in our passage over the way home : it teaches us his duty, his danger, and his privileges. We should therefore study it with faith and prayer.

7. The *instruments* God uses to teach us in the gospel. He directs us by plain doctrines, expositions, parables, history, prophecy, sermons, and prayers, and by the example of his own life. "He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps."

8. The *manner* in which we should read the gospel. Believe with the heart that it contains eternal truth. Be assured that our salvation depends upon the cordial believing of it. He who trades in the treasures of

immortality ; be serious, and pray much for the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Understand that Jesus is the Sun and centre of this divine system : that Christ and the Holy Ghost are the two great agents in the world of grace ; and that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

THE

PARABLES RECORDED IN THE GOSPEL.

ST. MATTHEW.

	CHAP.
THE house built on a rock, and that on the sand.....	7
The house swept and garnished	8
The sower : tares : mustard seed : heaven : hid treasure : the pearl of great price : the net : the householder.....	13
The lost sheep : the king and the great debtor.....	18
The labourers sent into the vineyard.....	20
The two sons : the vineyard let out to husbandmen	21
The marriage supper, and the wedding garment	22
The fig tree putting forth leaves	24
The ten virgins : the ten talents : sheep and goats	25

ST. MARK.

The sower : the seed ripening : the grain of mustard seed....	4
..... and let out to husbandmen	12
.....	13

The tree : the treasure	
The creditor and the two debtors	
The sower : the lights	
The good s.....	10
.....	11
.....	
wicked	
.....	12
the mustard s	13
a wedding : the gr	14
lost sheep, the lost silver, s	15
The unjust steward : the rich r	16

	CHAP.
The unjust judge and widow : the Pharisee and Publican....	18
The nobleman going to receive a kingdom.....	19
The vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen.....	20
The fig tree and all the trees shooting forth	21

ST. JOIN.

The vine and the branches	15
---------------------------------	----

THE

MIRACLES RECORDED IN THE GOSPEL.

ST. MATTHEW.

	CHAP.
JESUS heals all manner of diseases, and casts out devils	4
He cleanses the leper, heals the Centurion's servant, Peter's mother, &c. calls the * * * * * sea, casts out devils,	8
He heals the palsy, the Ruler's daughter, bloody issue : gives sight to two blind men : casts out a dumb devil	9
He heals the withered hand : casts out devils	12
He feeds a multitude: stills the sea : heals all that touch him,	14
He heals the daughter of the woman of Canaan, and many in Galilee: feeds the multitude	15
The transfiguration : devils ejected: the tribute money	17
Jesus heals the sick in his way to Judea.....	19
He gives sight to the blind men	20
He heals the blind and lame: dries up the fig tree.....	21
Four notable miracles when Christ was on the cross	27
The resurrection of Christ.....	28

Jesus cures the leper,	1
He heals the paralytic	2
He heals the man with the withered hand, and many others..	3
Christ walks through the tempest by his word.....	4
The legion : the bloody issue : Jairus's daughter	5
Jesus feeds the multitude	6
He heals the blind man, and the deaf and dumb ..	7
He feeds the multitude and gives sight to the blind	8
The transfiguration of Christ and dumb spirit.....	9
Jesus gives sight to the blind man.....	10
He dries the fig tree, the traders from the temple.....	11
The land darkened : the rent of the temple rent.....	15
The resurrection of Christ	16

ST. LUKE.

	CHAP.
Zacharias struck dumb : the conception of Mary.....	1
The star which guides to Bethlehem	2
The unclean spirit ejected : Peter's mother healed : many diseases healed : many devils cast out, &c.	4
The draught of fishes : the leper, the paralytic.....	5
The withered hand : divers diseases healed	6
The Centurion's servant healed : the widow's son raised	7
The tempest : the legion : the bloody issue : Jarius's daughter	8
Five thousand fed: transfiguration : demoniac cured	9
Jesus casts out a devil.....	11
He heals the woman that was bowed down	13
He heals a woman of the dropsy.....	14
He cleanseth ten lepers	17
He opens the eyes of a blind man	18
He drives the traders from the temple	19
He heals the high priest's servant's ear	22
The darkness, and the veil of the temple	23
The resurrection and ascension of Jesus	24

ST. JOHN.

The water turned to wine : the traders in the temple	2
Jesus heals the nobleman's son	4
He heals a cripple at Bethesda	5
He feeds a multitude : walks on the sea : calms the tempest..	6
He gives sight to one that was born blind.....	9
He raises Lazarus from the dead	11
He heals Malchus's ear	18
He raises himself from death to life	20
The draught of fishes a of Tiberius	21

The ACT

The Order and leading Subjects

THIS book, containing the history of the life and sufferings of our Saviour, after his resurrection, was written by St. Luke the Evangelist, who inscribes the same, as he did also to his friend Theophilus. Among other interesting

gives us a succinct but full account of the ascension of Christ, of the consequent effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and of the wonderful success which thereby attended the preaching of the gospel. To warn us of the dreadful consequences of hypocrisy, it recites the terrible judgments inflicted upon Ananias and Sapphira. It recounts the order and first settlement of the Church of God, in the ordination of deacons: and gives us a particular account of Stephen the chief of them; of his indefatigable zeal for Christ, his cruel martyrdom, and triumphant death. It details at large the dreadful persecutions which the apostles every where experienced in preaching the doctrines of the cross, and the wisdom and power of God in overruling those persecutions for the advancement of his glory and the increase of his church. In the eighth and ninth chapters, we have the affecting story of the bitter persecution raised against the church by Saul of Tarsus; his miraculous conversion as he was journeying to Damascus; and his designation to the office of an apostle. From the thirteenth chapter to the end, this narrative is almost exclusively occupied with the travels, and labours, and sufferings of St. Paul, in making known to the Gentiles the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he had sent.

This book contains the history of the Christian church for about thirty years after Christ's ~~Ascension~~.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The descent of Christ : the ordination of Matthias.
2. The descent of the Holy Ghost, and its joyful consequences.
3. The lame man healed by Peter and John.
4. Peter and John rebuked, and discharged.
5. The sin and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira.
6. The ordination of the seven : Stephen charged with blasphemy.
7. Stephen's defence, and his martyrdom.
8. Saul persecutes the church : the Ethiopian eunuch converted.
9. The miraculous vision of Saul.
10. Cornelius a devout centurion received into the church.
11. Peter's defence, when accused of going to the uncircumcised.

CHAP.

12. The martyrdom of James : the imprisonment of Peter : the death of Herod.
13. Paul and Barnabas are sent to the Gentiles.
14. They are grievously persecuted, and return to Antioch.
15. Divisions in the church : Paul and Barnabas contend and separate.
16. The labours and persecutions of Paul and Silas.
17. Paul preaches at Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.
18. He arrives at Corinth : his great success there.
19. Paul at Ephesus : a violent tumult excited by Demetrius.
20. Paul visits the churches : his farewell discourse to that of Ephesus.
21. His voyage to Jerusalem, where he is apprehended and bound.
22. Paul defends himself, and pleads his privilege as a Roman citizen.
23. A dispute arises among Paul's accusers : he is sent to Felix.
24. Paul before Felix : he preaches to him and his wife Drusilla.
25. Paul accused before Festus, appeals to Cesar.
26. He preaches Christ before Festus and Agrippa.
27. His voyage to Rome, and shipwreck.
28. His kind reception at Melita, and arrival at Rome.

Observations on the Acts of the Apostles.

Much useful instruction may be drawn from this history of the word of God. The chief observation is,

1. *The descent of the Holy Ghost upon Christ the Saviour.*

so the Holy Ghost frequently intimated the necessity of his departure from them to his removal.

Our Lord in his various discourses frequently intimated the necessity of his departure from them to his removal.

" And continues every one above us have given to effects it hath What are the

other Christians to abide with

after of this book

ment of this promise.

Holy Ghost's descent: it

The feast of Pentecost was observed by the Jews, as a memorial of the giving of the law from mount Sinai; so that day is significantly chosen, by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, for the promulgation of the gospel-law from mount Sion, Mark, secondly, *the manner* of his descent. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty mind; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." The Holy Ghost is here represented by two distinct emblems, *wind* and *fire*; each of which denotes him to be a sovereign agent. As "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth;" so the Holy Ghost dispenses his influences when and where he pleaseth, "dividing to every man severally as he will." The cloven tongues of fire do likewise fitly represent the operations of the Holy Ghost, which, like the fire, are penetrating, vehement, transforming, and diffusive. May this fire continue to spread from heart to heart, and from place to place, till the sacred flame shall be communicated to all nations! Mark, thirdly, *the immediate consequence* of his descent. "They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Our Lord had commissioned his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations: but how shall they execute this commission, seeing they are plain, illiterate men, and probably unacquainted with any language but their own? The commission was impracticable without a suitable qualification. But by the miraculous gift of tongues, every obstacle was removed; and thus qualified, the apostles went forth and preached every where, working with them, and confirming

nature, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~. The effects which follow occasions of the福音 ~~christ~~ were immediately proved in the propagation were filled with love, joy, and up among the ~~people~~ and publicly to preach. They were soon found ~~among~~ Their zeal could not be long of men, and made ~~men~~ at that time filled with a ness and hypocrisy. ~~men~~ had come from different

in a little time between the Grecians and the Hebrews : and it was not long before the first disciples were thrown into strong debates, and in danger of divisions, upon questions of trifling consequence. Thus the fair beauty of the church, was marred at a very early period by the irregularities and offences which crept into it. This melancholy truth may suggest to us two reflections :—1. That the best of men are still liable to mistakes and weaknesses :—2. That in the best societies there will always be found some unworthy intruders. May the former reflection humble us, and may the latter excite us to a holy fear and jealousy of ourselves ! As members of the christian church, let us carefully attend to the apostle's exhortation ; “ I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment : ” “ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” 1 Cor. i. 10. Ephes. iv. 3.

4. *The bitter enmity of the world against the gospel.*—Our Lord frequently discoursed with his disciples upon the sufferings and persecutions which they should undergo for his sake. He particularly foretold that “they should be delivered up to the synagogues; that

"... cast into prisons, and be brought before
r a testimony against them; that
uld be put to death, and that they
ll men for his name's sake." Luke

xxi. 12, fo, r. Throughout the Acts o' the
we see the literal fulfilment of these w.
place where the gospel came. persec
up: christianity was vil
spoken agaiⁿ new
in post ns. the
writites of

The old enemy woman and that of
late Abel, but because he
—Why did Esau hate Jacob? —
vourites of
between the
nt. Why did
re righteous?
use he obtained

the blessing.—Why did Saul hate David?—Because the Lord was with him. Why did Ahab hate Micaiah?—Because of his prophecies. Such are the causes of the world's enmity against the true servants of God. “If they were of the world, the world would love them as its own; but because they are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them.” Should it be asked, what were the motives which influenced the heathens so bitterly to persecute christianity? We answer, the true and proper cause is to be found in that enmity of the carnal heart which cannot be brought to submit to the wisdom and will of God. This has been the secret source of all the persecution which has been the lot of the true disciples of Christ in every age. The doctrine of the cross ever was, and always will be the capital offence. If it were possible that Christians could maintain that course of conduct which the gospel requires, and, at the same time conceal the principles and motives on which they act; they might perhaps come off more easily with the world. But their principles must not, cannot be concealed: They who know and love Christ, and are sensible of their obligations to him, will glory in him, and in him only. They will avow that it is not by their own power and holiness that they escape the pollutions of the world, but that they derive all their strength from faith in his blood, and from the supports of his grace. ~~They dare not conceal this, nor do they desire it: though they are sensible that the world, whether it bears the name of Heathen or Christian, will hate and despise them for it.~~ Let the servants of Christ remember it is written, that “all that shall live in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” Instead of being discouraged by this injurious treatment, let them be comforted by the gracious assurance of their Lord and Master. ~~Wretched are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.~~

5. The *unalterable necessity in the present constitution of things, that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.*—That this was the case in

the primitive church, every page of this narrative abundantly confirms. But we are told by some, that things are now greatly altered. They would persuade us, that in these our happy days, the way to heaven is smooth, easy, and much frequented :—the very marks by which our Lord characterizes the road to destruction. Such writers and preachers are little aware how they proclaim their own ignorance. If they knew the spirit of enmity which the world bears to true Christianity ; the trials with which the Lord visits his people, to exercise their faith ; the assaults and temptations they endure from the powers of darkness ; the griefs they feel from a sense of their own unfaithfulness and unfruitfulness ; the fightings without and the fears within, which are more or less experienced in the Christian life : if they knew these things they would speak otherwise. The beaten way to worldly honours and preferments is perhaps free from these tribulations ; but not so the way that will lead us to the kingdom of God. Our Lord's declaration, (Luke x. 3.) "Behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves," is applicable to all his servants. Wicked men are like wolves, whose nature it is to devour and destroy : God's people are like sheep among them, of a contrary nature and disposition. What can such expect but to be worried and torn continually ? The spirit of the gospel is directly contrary to the spirit of the world : hence wherever it comes, it ~~would~~ ~~excites~~, and excites antipathy. And this will always be the case, while human nature and the state of the world remain as they are. How grievous tribulation may be to flesh and blood, let us remember that this was the ~~way~~ ~~path~~ ~~which~~ ~~the~~ ~~apostles~~ went before us. He calls us to no ~~high~~ ~~service~~ ~~but~~ ~~to~~ ~~serve~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~ ~~as~~ ~~sheep~~ ~~in~~ ~~wolves~~ ~~among~~ ~~wolves~~. This was the path trodden by all the apostles, and by his apostles. Mark particularly the ~~hardships~~ ~~of St. Paul~~ as he laboured, so he ~~overcame~~ ~~more~~ ~~abundantly~~ than the rest. His person was treated with contempt, his character traduced, his doctrine misrepresented, and though his natural and acquired abilities were great, yet he was

esteemed "the filth and offscouring of all things," and counted no better than a babbler and a madman. **Acts xvii. 18. and xxvi. 24.** Let not then the servants of Christ be surprised or grieved that they suffer on account of their attachment to him. Let them rather quietly submit to their lot. The matter is appointed and fixed, and cannot be altered. He that has the sovereign disposal of us, has determined, that all that will be Christ's disciples, must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. Tribulation is a furnace into which we *must* go: it is a Red Sea through which we *must* pass; but the Lord has made a way through it for all his redeemed. The joy and glory of the end will make abundant amends for all the difficulties and hardships we may meet with in the way. If it be true that we must go by the cross, if we would attain the crown; it is equally true, that a believing prospect of that reward will make the yoke of Christ easy, and tribulation for his sake, light and pleasant.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES.

THE four evangelists laid the foundation of the Christian system, and the apostles of Christ raised the superstructure. Both agree in setting forth the one glorious Saviour, and the one way of salvation through his blood and righteousness ; yet the apostles dive deeper into the doctrines of Christ, and speak plainly and fully of what was more darkly and sparingly revealed before. The Christian church in its infancy was not capable of receiving at once the doctrines of Christ in all their splendour ; therefore are they brought to view in a gradual manner. Jesus said to his disciples, " I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The office of Evangelists was somewhat different from that of Apostles, though employed in the same great work. The Evangelists were appointed to write the life of Christ, to lay down the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and to publish them abroad : but the Apostles were more particularly the Ambassadors of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God ; therefore it pleased the Father that the latter should more fully develope the doctrines of grace and the mysteries of godliness. Very remarkable power attended their ministry ; the gross darkness which covered the earth vanished before the light of their glorious doctrines ; multitudes turned to the living God ; and the Saviour's name was glorified in spite of all opposition.

There are in the New Testament many important doctrines brought forward which were not expressly declared, but were implied : but they are here handled in a didactic or didactical manner ; particularly the doctrines of original sin, justification by faith, imputed righteousness, the inward strife between sin

and grace in the regenerate, the final perseverance of the saints, the abrogation of the ceremonial law, the harmony between the Old and New Testament, the use and benefits of the Christian sacraments, with several prophecies of things then future, especially of the rise, reign, and downfall of Antichrist.

Several of the epistles were addressed to particular churches. Most of them were occasioned by some circumstances attending those churches to which they were inscribed: and the state and character of the church addressed may be learned from the general tenor of the epistle. That at Corinth was divided; that at Galatia was disturbed by Judaizing teachers; and the case of the Hebrews was cleaving to Moses. Yet are we by no means to conclude that the epistles were intended to be confined to those churches which first received them. No: they were designed by the Holy Ghost to be the rule of faith and practice to the church of God in all ages. They belong to us and to our children equally with those who lived in the apostle's days, whenever we are brought into similar circumstances. What God said to them of truth and error, of obedience and rebellion, of union and division, he saith also to us.

In the epistles, you will find faith and practice, grace and holiness, always united. They indeed affirm, that salvation is all of grace; but they affirm also the grace which bringeth salvation, teacheth us

worldliness and worldly lusts, and to
and godly in this present world. They
trives of grace for the foundation
the necessity of leading a
God hath joined
. . . . without

God in us
without practical g.
are saved by grac

THE EPISTLES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

<i>Epistles to</i>	<i>Places where written.</i>	A. D.
Galatians	Thessalonica.....	51
1 Thessalonians	Corinth	52
2 Thessalonians	Corinth	52
1 Corinthians	Ephesus.....	57
2 Corinthians	Macedonia.....	58
1 Timothy	Macedonia.....	58
Titus	Macedonia.....	58
Romans	Corinth.....	58
James	Judea.....	61
2 Timothy	Rome	61
Philemon	Rome	62
Colossians	Rome	62
Ephesians	Rome	62
Philippians	Rome	62
Hebrews	Rome	63
Jude	Uncertain	64
1 Peter	Rome	64
2 Peter	Rome	67
Three Epistles of St. John	Ephesus	70
Revelation	Patmos.....	80 to 90

N. B.—The learned are not agreed respecting the date of several of the Epistles, and where they were sent from.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ST. PAUL.

THE apostle Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, born in the great city Tarsus, and educated at Jerusalem, under Dr. Gamaliel. In religion, he was a rigid Pharisee; a zealous persecutor of Christians, who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against them, and encouraged the stoning of Stephen. He received a commission from the priests to persecute, to imprison, and to kill the disciples of the Lord, and he exceeded all others against them. His conversion was miraculous. See Acts ix. The wolf became a shepherd, the destroyer a master-builder; and the bitterest persecutor the most powerful preacher in the

world. His endowments for the ministry were higher than any other man possessed. After receiving the best education, he was filled with the Holy Ghost. He spoke with tongues more than all the apostles. He had the gift of prophecy, and every other gift in the highest degree. He wrought mighty miracles, healed diseases, cast out devils, raised the dead, struck Elimas blind, &c. He excelled in revelations and visions, and received the gospel immediately from God ; he was caught up into the third heaven, and on divers occasions he had visions from Christ to direct him. In labours and success he was more abundant than all the apostles. He laboured night and day ; took long and hazardous journeys by sea and land ; flew to the ends of the earth ; planted and built up churches in all lands ; and as a specimen of the unexampled sufferings which he endured for Christ and his cause, read 2 Cor. xi. 23—29. His Lord employed him to write more epistles to the churches than all the rest of the apostles together, (fourteen in all). In elegance of style, and depth of matter, he is by far the first of the apostles ; and in every grace which adorns the Christian, he is exceeded by no saint. He had the honour of dying a martyr in the cause of his Lord and Master. It is related, that he converted Nero's mistress, who would no longer live in uncleanness ; which so enraged the emperor, that he caused Paul to be beheaded in the city of Rome, thirty-seven years after his conversion, and in the year of his age.

OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

He his way to Damaskus.
 Goes to Arabia, and returns to Damaskus,
 thence in a basket over the wall,
 He comes to Jerusalem, see Peter,
 He is rescued from prison, and carried to Cesarea,
 thence goes to S. Sergius and S. Fusius in Cilicia,

	A. D.
He travels with Barnabas to Antioch,	42
— goes again to Tarsus, where Paulus is converted,	46
He preaches in Antioch, Pisidia, and Galatia,	47
He spends some time at Iconium,	48
Soon after, he visits Lystra	49
He goes to Pisidia, Pamphilia, and returns to Antioch.....	50
— goes up to Jerusalem, and returns to Antioch	52
He goes with Silas into Syria and Cilicia ; and with Timothy to Derbe, Lystra, Macedonia, and Philippi	54
—goes to Athens, and Thessalonica	55
He stays at Corinth a year and a half	57
He goes to Ephesus, Cesarea, Jerusalem, and Antioch ; and visits the churches in Asia and Phrygia	58
— goes again to Ephesus, tarries two years, and appoints Timothy the first Bishop of that diocese	59
He goes to Troas, Macedonia, and Philippi	60
He goes to Greece, and returns by Macedonia to Troas	62
He goes to Assos, Mytclene, Samos, Trogelium, Miletus, and Ephesus : and sails to Rhodes, Cesarea, and Jerusalem	63
He is apprehended, sent to prison at Cesarea, where he remains two years and appeals to Cesar	65
He is sent by sea prisoner to Rome	66
He is condemned to lose his head for preaching Christ	68

N. B. There may be inaccuracy in some of the above dates.

R O M A N S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

" AFTER the introduction, the apostle opens his subject, by shewing man's relations and ~~obligations~~ to God his Creator, and his apostasy from his original purity and service. He proceeds to expose the inherent sinfulness of both Gentiles and Jews, and the impossibility of any man purifying himself before God by his own devices. Having brought the world in guilty and ~~reprobate~~ ~~state~~ of wrath, he proceeds to state the method of our salvation by the mercy of God, through the redemption of his Son, and the way of justification by faith in his blood. This he proves, illustrates, and exemplifies very fully. He next proceeds to show, that

this way of justification is closely connected with sanctification and evangelical obedience. He then states the believer's experience and conflicts, and displays his character, hopes and privileges, and at length, he leads our reflections back to the source of these blessings, in the eternal election and sovereign love and mercy of God. Having thus stated, proved, and answered objections to his doctrine, and discussed several questions respecting the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, he applies the whole discourse, by a variety of practical exhortations, precepts, and instructions, enforced by evangelical motives. He concludes with affectionate salutations, and with ascribing glory to God our Saviour."

SCOTT.

In this epistle, St. Paul is—*The Systematical Divine.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Preface : the deplorable condition of the Gentile world.
2. The Jews also by nature are under condemnation.
3. Neither Jew nor Gentile can be justified by the law : but only by grace.
4. Justification by faith, exemplified in the case of Abraham.
5. The fruits and foundation of justification.
6. Sanctification, the inseparable fruit of justification.
7. The believer dead to the law, and alive to Christ—his conflicts.
8. The character, privileges, and triumphs of belief.
9. Electing love the source of salvation : objections.
10. Jews and Gentiles saved by the righteousness of Christ.
 •
 rejection, and final restoration of the Jews.
 various duties towards God and man.
 as members of civil society.
 members of the church of Christ.
 with an account of himself.
 the Saviour.

Annotations on Romans.

- I. The main subject which runs through this Epistle is the way in which a sinner is justified before God. The apostle, in order to make this clear, shews that

all are condemned ; that none can justify themselves ; and that the only way for a sinner to be justified is by believing with the heart in Jesus Christ. To see how he handles the subject, let us briefly consider each chapter in order.

Chap. i. The *Gentiles* are here proved to be guilty and condemned.—They had no Bible, but they had the book of nature to convince them that there is a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, who made and governed all things. They might have seen that it was their duty to serve him, and their interest to worship a living rather than a dead God. But through the depravity of their hearts, they would have no God but idols. The Lord gave them up, and they plunged themselves into the vilest practices with greediness, which proves that their boasted virtue could not justify them.

Chap. ii. The *Jews* are also shown to be by nature in a lost condition.—They despised the Gentiles for their ignorance and depravity, while they themselves sinned under great advantages : having the book of the law, as well as the book of nature. The Jews judged of their own state by their privileges, and thought they were far more holy than the Gentiles, because their religious advantages were far greater. Paul labours to prove that, as they had abused higher privileges than the Gentiles possessed, they must be deeper in ~~sin~~ than they. The Jews therefore are condemned by the law, and stand in need of some new way to be justified.

Chap. iii. *Neither Jew nor Gentile* saved by the merit of their own works. We have great advantage over the Gentiles, in that we have sinned ; that is to say, we have offended God. The only way to salvation is by believing in the Son of God.

of God, and thus to partake of his righteousness. He proves that this new way of Justification is equally offered to all men; that every true believer is reconciled to God; and that all unbelievers must perish, be they Jews or Gentiles.

Chap. iv. Justification by faith is here *exemplified in the case of Abraham*.—The Jews in general looked to the law for life, and had no idea of the gospel way of justification through faith in Christ. Therefore St. Paul labours to prove and explain this doctrine at large. This he had done by arguments in the preceding chapter, and here he illustrates it by the example of Abraham, who was justified by faith, and not by works: by grace, and not by merit. The scope of his argument is this:—Abraham is the father of the faithful, whether Jews or Gentiles; and all his children must be justified in the same way with himself. He was justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; therefore so must they. As he was justified without circumcision, it is clear that Gentiles are justified also without it, when they believe in Christ. Believing Abraham abounded in good works, yet were they the fruits of his faith, and in no sense or degree the cause of his justification.

Chap. v. The *fruits and foundation* of justification are here shown.—Paul having proved in the preceding chapters that a sinner can be justified before God in no way but by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus, proceeds in the beginning of this, to show some of the blessed *fruits* of justification. Believers enjoy the ~~same~~ ~~same~~ if they never had sinned, and rejoice in God, having his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. They glory in their sufferings, for his sake, and triumph in assurance of their salvation, knowing that he who died for his enemies will never forsake them, nor suffer his children to perish: and this assurance gives them joy in God.—From the 12th verse to the end, the apostle describes the *foundation* of our justification, which is laid in the death of Jesus. He shows, that as

Adam, by one sin, ruined all his posterity, and brought them under condemnation; so Jesus, by his blood and righteousness, justifies all believers, forgives them all trespasses, and gives them life eternal.

Chap. vi. *Sanctification* is shown to be the necessary fruit and inseparable companion of justification. The whole of the three former chapters were written to prove and explain the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the two preceding to show the necessity of it. In this chapter, the apostle guards against any abuse that may be made of the doctrine of salvation by grace, by showing that all who are justified by faith are renewed by the Spirit. He proves in the clearest manner and with the strongest arguments, that if we are pardoned, we are also purified; that where sin is forgiven, it is subdued and forsaken; and that all who are brought into a state of salvation, live godly in Christ Jesus. The sinner that is not renewed, is not forgiven, and the servant of sin must die. But they who love God and live to his glory, have passed from death unto life.

Chap. vii. This chapter may be called the *Christian's conflict*. The life of faith in the believer is here described by three things in his experience towards the law of God.—His deadness to it; his regard for it; and his desire to fulfil it.—The believer is *dead* to the law, and alive to Christ. Man by nature is married to the law, and seeks life by his obedience to it. But when he comes to experience the grace of the gospel, he gives up all hopes of life by the law, ^{rejects} all from Christ; and henceforth he lives ^{and} produces the fruits of the Spirit. ^{and}
regards the law of God ^{as} ~~ever~~ ^{and} ~~now~~ infinitely holy. ^{and} ~~now~~ the law, thou ^{and} alone. Therefore ^{now} ~~now~~; but finds a body of ^{now} ~~now~~ ~~now~~ his obedience. This inward ^{now} ~~now~~ ~~now~~ between sin and grace is here described in a masterly as well as highly experimental manner. The

Christian groans bitterly that sin hinders him to obey, as he would, the God he loves.

Chap. viii. This chapter shows how *believers live*, and what *great privileges* they enjoy and hope for.—They *live* after the Spirit, and not after the flesh ; they mind the things of the Spirit, and mortify the deeds of the body ; they live to Christ, and deny themselves. Sin dwells in them ; yet grace reigns in their hearts, and governs their lives. They are become the servants of God, and will no more serve sin.—Their *privileges* are inexpressibly great ; they are in Christ and cannot be condemned, for God justifies them. God is for them, and makes all things to work together for their good : and they draw near unto him as their reconciled Father. The Spirit of Christ dwelleth in them, as the Spirit of faith and prayer, the Spirit of holiness and comfort, and the Spirit of adoption witnessing that they are the sons of God and joint heirs with Christ. He assures them that they shall be finally delivered from sin and corruption, and remain one with Christ for ever ; which leads them to triumph in their present blessings, and future prospects.

Chap. ix. We are here led back to the *source of all blessings*, the election of grace, the election of individuals to be brought to Christ to obtain salvation. The election of Israel under a national covenant is introduced to illustrate the eternal election of the true Israelites. Had the apostle only insisted on the election of the Jewish nation, they would have found no fault ~~with~~ this ; but they do find fault with what the apostle maintains, and a great part of the chapter is in answer to their objections. What Paul insists upon is this : that the Jews had forfeited even their national covenant for rejecting Christ ; and that the spiritual covenant and the promises of salvation did not belong to them ~~as~~ believers in Christ in common with believers in Jesus, whether Jews or Gentiles, are saved, and the rest perish ; and that the vessels of mercy believe in consequence of their election, and are not

elected in consequence of their faith. The purpose of God was infinitely earlier than grace in man.

Chap. x. The apostle here expresses his *deep concern for the Jews*, and strives to convince them of their blindness respecting the way of salvation. He allows that they earnestly desired to be saved; but tells them that they grossly mistook the way. He says to them, You are ignorant of the righteousness which God requires, a sinless obedience to the whole law: you are also ignorant of the righteousness which Jesus has prepared for sinners, by his obedience unto death for them, and which they obtain by believing the gospel. You therefore in this ignorance try to be righteous by your own imperfect obedience to the law; but you prop your tottering building on a false foundation, and it shall fall: you will be for ever ruined in this way. You Jews, have heard much of salvation by grace through the perfect righteousness of Jesus, you therefore ought to believe, and it is your duty to proclaim this way to the Gentiles, that they also may believe and be saved.

Chap. xi. The Jews are *in part rejected* for their unbelief, and the Gentiles that believe in Jesus are incorporated with the spiritual church of God. Here the Jews would say to Paul, the doctrine you advance goes to cast away all Israel. He answers, No, "A remnant is saved according to the election of grace;" and none are cast away but those that cast God away by rejecting his eternal Son. Some Jews are saved, (I am a Jew) not because they are Jews, but because they believe in Jesus; and their faith proceeds from the election of grace. The body of the Jew blinded, and cast off through unbelief; and the current of grace the present towardes take heed that do length Jacob, and restore his and he loved before all nations; and it not be any loss, but great gain to the Gentiles.—Here ends the doctrinal part of this epistle.

Chap. xii. We have in this and the following chapters the *godly practices* which must flow from the doctrines of grace that have been laid down. We have here, first, the duties which we owe unto God, and we are told what manner of persons we should be in all holiness.—Then we are directed how we are to employ our gifts, and fill up our offices in his church, which is his own body.—Lastly, we are exhorted to discharge the various duties which we owe towards all men.

Chap. xiii. The apostle proceeds to exhort Christians to obey the *civil Rulers* of the country they live in, and assigns the strongest reasons why they should do so, be the form of government and the rulers what they may. At the time the apostle wrote, Christians were under the government of blind heathens, and bloody persecutors; yet are they commanded to obey them: for the powers that be are ordained of God, who has his reasons for setting up at times bad rulers. Even then, rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Disobedience to civil governors is disobedience to God, and must always proceed either from the worst principles, or from ignorance of the work of God. Various duties towards members of society, are farther strongly inforced.

Chap. xiv. In the last place, the apostle exhorts all sorts of Christians to behave as becometh the gospel towards one another in *the church of God*. He gives directions to the weak in faith how to behave towards the strong. But more particularly he exhorts the strong to receive, to nourish, and not to offend their weak brethren; and he assigns many cogent reasons to show why they should act thus towards them.

Chap. xv. The apostle proceeds to exhort Christians to show all loving kindness towards one another, especially the *strong* in the *work of Christ*. And for the encouragement of the *weak*, in particular, Paul sets before them the *mercies* of the Saviour towards them; and then goes on to give an account of his own abundant labours among the Gentiles, in order to animate and establish them in the

faith. And withal he pours out his most fervent prayers for their prosperity in the gospel, and earnestly intreats them to pray for him.—Here ends the exhortations or practical part of this epistle.

Chap. xvi. Paul sends *salutations* from himself and the churches, and from individuals, to some of the most eminent saints that dwelt at Rome : warns them against schismatics that cause divisions, whom he well describes : concludes the epistle with giving praises to God the Saviour. Amen.

II. I would now make two short observations on the superior excellence of this Epistle, and on the state of the church to which it was first addressed.

1. The *excellency* of the epistle is above all praise. It is confessedly the most comprehensive and most instructive of all the epistles ; and is therefore called by some of the learned, ‘The ocean of Christian doctrines, and the golden key of the Holy Scriptures.’ It is a comprehensive summary of the grand doctrines of the New Testament, and is the only part of scripture that is delivered in a systematical form. Though it was at first addressed to the church at Rome, it is the property of the church of God in all ages and countries to the end of time. It belongs to us and to our children. May we profit exceedingly by the divine instructions it communicates.

2. The *church* at Rome was planted very early, by whom it is not clear, as the scripture is silent on this head—evidently not by any apostle, but probably by some of those that were converted on the day of Pentecost, and whom Paul salutes at the close of the epistle—perhaps by Aquila and Priscilla who had laboured with Paul at Cœ^m and such eminent men Andronieus, Junia^m might probably have assisted. Th^m chiefl^y of Gentiles, was v^m bounding with strong piety. Men of throughout all the world. It was found with their doctrine, princip^m act. Yet it should seem, from the tenor of the epistle, that the believing Jews and

Gentiles in this church disagreed; which was the case in other churches. It was the constant plan of the Jews to mingle law and gospel in the article of justification, and to exclude the Gentiles from the church of God; pleading their own exclusive rights to his favour. The Gentiles likewise, knowing that the door was opened from them, when the Jews were in part rejected, were too ready to insult the Jews, and triumph over them. St. Paul, to reconcile them, proves both Jews and Gentiles under sin, and that there was but one way for both to be justified before God. He therefore exhorts them to be one, and to guard against all divisions: to walk in the way of truth: to hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

I. CORINTHIANS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THIS Epistle may be divided into two parts.—
1. From the beginning to the end of the 6th chap. the apostle corrects the gross abuses and deep corruptions which had crept into the church after his departure; viz. schisms and divisions, spiritual pride, incest, litigiousness, fornication.—2. From the beginning of the 7th chapter to the end of the 15th, the apostle solves several questions of difficulty which the ~~Corinthians~~ had sent to him for his advice; namely, on marriage, divorce, ~~and~~ single state; eating things offered to idols, decent habit in public assemblies, the Lord's supper, spiritual gifts, ~~and~~ tongues, the resurrection.—3. The epistle concludes with directions, exhortations, and salutations.

In this epistle, St. Paul is the *Reprover*, and the *Counsellor* of Christians.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Of gifted men : divisions : worldly wisdom ; and God's choice.
2. Paul preaches Christ crucified : speaks the wisdom of God.
3. On divisions : ministers are the builders of the temple of God
4. Paul defends his ministry against conceited teachers.
5. Scandalous professors are to be excommunicated.
6. Of going to law before infidels : of fornication.
7. Of marriage and single life : and of the duties of both.
8. No liberty is to be used to the injury of weak believers.
9. Paul proposes himself for an example, in many points.
10. Discussions on the Jewish and Christian sacraments.
11. Disorders in religious assemblies, and at the Lord's table.
12. Diversities of gifts, illustrated by the members of one body.
13. All gifts are useless without divine love in the heart.
14. Directions for the right use of spiritual gifts.
15. On the resurrection of Christ and his people.
16. On charity ; with admonitions and salutations.

Observations on I. Corinthians.

1. The *history*.—Corinth, the glory of all Greece, was a great city of Achaia, which abounded with people, learning, and wealth ; but, in its heathen state, was infamous for luxury, lewdness, and all manner of vices. Paul went from Athens to Corinth, and preached the gospel there for a year and a half or two years, with great success ; and God encouraged him, by saying to him in a vision by night. “ Be not afraid to speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.” Acts xviii. 9, 10. Crispus and Sosthenes, chief rulers of the Jewish synagogue, with many more, were converted, and a Christian church was established, which soon grew into great eminence, and excelled in spiritual gifts. It abounded in superior attainments, who were eminent in wisdom, and knowledge ; eminent in every manner of spiritual gifts, and who excelled as fluent orators. This gave them ascendency over the minds of the common people.

These eminent gifts, however, and high qualifications,

were *not sanctified*, nor consecrated to the real service of the church of God, nor duly employed to carry on the Christian cause. On the contrary, these gifted men grew proud of their eloquence and carnal wisdom, set up in opposition to St. Paul, and strove to bring him into disrepute, by representing him as a babbler of low attainments. Thus they drew after them a great number of admirers, to the great confusion and injury of the whole church. Some adhered faithfully to St. Paul, their spiritual father; others were dazzled with showy talents, and followed different leaders. When once they departed from unity and order, the enemy came in like a flood: errors increased, and vices were multiplied. After the apostle had been away about three years, he was informed by the house of Chloe, that the church of Corinth was filled with proud teachers, with discord and licentiousness; torn into factions, and marred with profligacy. St. Paul was also consulted by the faithful on several cases of difficulty. And these two points induced him to write his first epistle to the Corinthians.

II. We shall notice the **ABUSES** which infested the church, and what the apostle saith to each of them.

1. *Schisms and divisions.*—Some admired and followed one teacher, and some another, leaving their spiritual father. All extolled their favourite, and decried others; and nothing but wrangling and divisions were found among them, to the great injury of spiritual religion.—St. Paul strongly censures these mischievous proceedings, and with great zeal, wisdom, and argument, endeavours to put an end to them. He beseeches the Corinthians to live in unity and godly love; because Christ is one, ~~and his body one~~. He proves that he had not caused these ~~schisms~~; that his doctrine and manner of teaching ~~had divided~~ to preserve union; that he had delivered it ~~with much~~ with great simplicity and preached Christ ~~criticized~~ with all plainness of speech. He shows that all true ministers are servants of one master, employed in building the same temple, and that therefore they should be one;

and that they who, through their proud wisdom, had caused divisions, were doing immense mischief. The apostle in a masterly style, exposes the folly and wickedness of these self-admiring teachers, and most ably defends his own ministry, showing that he had laid the true foundation, and warning them to see how they built upon it. Finally, he beseeches the believing Corinthians to cleave unto him as their spiritual father giving every proof that he still cares for them. Chap. i.—iv.

2. *Incest.*—A man at Corinth, professing godliness, had married his mother-in-law, his father's widow, which St. Paul pronounces a grievous evil, and a scandal to the whole church. He blames the Corinthians exceedingly for their neglect of discipline, who were so far from punishing the offender and mourning over his guilt, that they were quite easy, and even puffed up. The apostle orders them to excommunicate him, and directs how this is to be done, and for what end. He shows the necessity of this proceeding, and the benefit that would ensue. They obeyed, and by this wholesome discipline, a soul was saved from death. Chap. v.

3. Going to law before Heathen Magistrates.—The government under which Christians then lived was infidel. The Christians at Corinth were given to covetousness, and worldly-mindedness, which greatly destroyed the spirit and power of religion among them. They oppressed one another, and quarrelled about earthly things; and instead of settling their differences in the spirit of love as brethren, they appealed to the law and the decision of heathen magistrates.—This conduct the apostle condemns in strong terms, and shows the absurdity of preferring the judgment of infidels before that of the saints. At last judge the world. He warns them, that such proceedings reflect upon the whole church. Not one man that possessed sufficient wisdom to settle their minor differences. And shows that it would be far more to their credit and advantage to suffer wrong than to injure their brethren. Chap. vi. to verse 12.

4. *Fornication.*—This sin was commonly practised, tolerated, and even defended by some.—In order to expose their folly, and reform their manners, St. Paul proves the sinfulness of fornication, by showing that those who are guilty of it sin against their own bodies, dishonour Christ, and grieve the Holy Spirit, whose temple they must not defile. Christians are bound to glorify God with their souls and bodies: for Christ hath purchased both the soul and the body with his most precious blood. Chap. vi. 13, to the end.

III. Paul in the remaining part of the epistle gives his *advice* in the several cases they had consulted him upon. Chap. vii—xv.

1. Concerning the *marriage of believers*, the unmarried, and the widows: divorce: the case of virgins: of second marriages. The directions given on all these subjects are written in chap. vii.

2. *Things sacrificed unto idols.*—The apostle shows that an idol is nothing, therefore cannot pollute what is offered unto it, yet dissuadeth them from eating of it for various reasons, especially that weak brethren may not be offended, and that Christ may not be dis-honoured: because we cannot partake of the Lord's supper and of idol feasts. Chap. viii.—He proposes himself as an example of self-denial in lawful things. Chap. ix.—He sets before them the danger of having to do with idols, by the punishments which fell on Israel. Chap. x.

3. *Proper dresses for religious assemblies.*—It seems that men and women dressed indecently at Corinth. Would to God that this was done no where else! Numbers of professed Christians among us are far more concerned to have their vile bodies decked with ornaments, than to have ~~the~~ precious souls adorned with grace: and in the house ~~and~~ they gaze around and mark the fashions, but ~~the~~ God is there. When they depart, they can tell you all the dresses; but forget the doctrines. Let such triflers know, that God will bring them to judgment. Chap. xi.

4. *The Lord's Supper.*—Paul severely censures the

Corinthians for their profanation of this ordinance ; refers them to its first institution by the Lord Jesus before his death ; reminds them that it represents his body and blood atoning for sin : and that all Christians are to keep it in remembrance of our Lord until his coming again. He gives them directions how to communicate worthily, so as to receive his blessings, and escape his judgments. Chap. xi. 20.

5. *Spiritual gifts.*—The apostle, to correct their pride and contempt of each other, shows that all gifts are from the same eternal Spirit ; that he gives unto every one severally as he will ; that every one should consecrate his gifts to the service of the church, so that believers in the mystical body of Christ may benefit one another, as the members do in the natural body. He exhorts them to covet what is more excellent than all gifts—the love of God in the heart: Chap. xii. The nature, the necessity, and the praises of this divine principle are beautifully set forth in chap. xiii.

6. *The gift of tongues.*—The Corinthians in their pride coveted to speak in diverse tongues. St. Paul shows, that to prophesy or explain the scriptures, is a far more profitable gift, as being of greater edification to the church, and therefore more to be coveted than to speak in all languages. Man is ever prone to esteem ornamental gifts rather than useful talents ; and to covet the honour that cometh from man in preference to that which cometh from God. Chap. xiv.

7. *The resurrection from the dead.*—There were heresies in the church of Corinth, who denied the resurrection. St. Paul, in the grandest style and with the most irresistible arguments, proves that Christ died and rose again to life ; that the resurrection of his people is secured by ~~his~~ ^{the} creation ; and that all who sleep in Jesus ~~shall~~ ^{rise} on a glorious immortality. His arguments are numerous and conclusive : let our faith prevail and labours abound, till we finally triumph over death and the grave. Chap. xv.

IV. Observations on the GENERAL TENOR of this epistle.

1. *The state of the primitive churches varied very much, therefore the epistles addressed to them vary also.* The character of many of these churches may be learned from the general tenor of the epistles that were sent to them. By the great variety of cases which occurred in the Apostles' days, the Holy Ghost took occasion to administer such a body of instructions as will always be for direction to the universal church under the same circumstances. The epistle to the Romans furnishes us with a complete body of Christian doctrines. The epistles to the Corinthians give directions respecting church discipline, and gospel order in our religious assemblies ; and they are of peculiar use to us, because they come down to a variety of particulars in common life. On this account they are invaluable ; though superficial readers may think less of them than of other epistles.

2. From the state of things at Corinth, we learn, that *superior privileges* do not always produce superior fruits. Churches may be blessed with the greatest and best teachers, and yet be inferior to others that have not their advantages. At Corinth they had the great apostle of the Gentiles for their father, and the founder of their church, and who wrought mighty miracles among them ; yet the Christians at Rome were more exalted in grace, though they had no apostle for their teacher and guide.

3. We see, likewise, that Christian churches may abound in *gifts*, and yet be low in grace, and produce but little of the fruits of righteousness. At Corinth they greatly excelled in all manner of spiritual gifts, without much spirituality in their religion. These splendid talents without much piety, could not long preserve the church in a flourishing state. Accordingly, soon after the apostle's departure, they split into angry parties, and fell into grievous disorder and scandalous practices ; they became worldly, ambitious, carnal, and contentious ; and suffered gross iniquities to prevail with impunity.

4. We learn farther, that the *ministers* who are ren-

dered most useful to a people, and at one time stand highest in their esteem and affections, may, without any cause on their part, lose all credit with their spiritual children whom they have begotten by the word ; and have the mortification of seeing worthless teachers preferred before them. So it happened with Paul at Corinth. At first they admired him above all men ; but in his absence, artful dry nurses drew multitudes away, whom they taught to despise the man that had brought them from idols to Christ. What was done at Corinth has been done in a thousand churches ; and if Paul could be brought into disrepute, who can expect better treatment ?

5. This epistle, above all parts of scripture, discovers *the spirit* which generally causes divisions among Christians. It is not commonly the spirit of religion, but the spirit of the world ; not conscience, but conceit. Cases may possibly occur where divisions may be necessary, to avoid the contagion of fundamental errors and heresies. But at Corinth the church was torn and divided by the prevailing influence of proud ambitious men, who laboured to set the apostle aside that they themselves might be exalted.

6. In this epistle we have also instructive lessons and faithful admonitions to keep up *strict discipline* in the church of God. In this we are all woefully degenerated from the example of Christian churches in better days. Our criminal neglect in this particular, is deeply felt and bewailed by all denominations possessing spiritual religion. At Corinth, the doctrine was preserved ; but while the discipline was neglected, the spirit and power of religion vanished. What a solemn warning to all churches of the saints !

II. CORINTHIANS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

ST. PAUL throughout this epistle, expresses his holy indignation against the false teachers who had occasioned such discord and divisions in the Corinthian church. He begins in a way of self-defence, with relating his own sufferings in Asia, and with assigning other reasons for delaying to return to Corinth. He gives directions to restore the penitent incestuous person ; and dwells at considerable length on the nature of the Christian Ministry, and on his own labours and conduct as the servant of the Lord. He sets before them his great fidelity, deep trials, and glorious prospects. He exhorts them to reform, and expresses his joy at the good effects which his former letter had produced among them. He, in chap. viii. ix. urges them to be liberal in charitable contributions ; and spends the whole of chap. x. xi. xii. in reluctantly contrasting his own gifts, labours, and sufferings, with the proud pretensions of their turbulent preachers, with a view to justify his apostleship against those who strove to ruin his reputation at Corinth. He shows, that in revelations he was above all the apostles ; yet gloried only in Christ, who made his strength perfect in his weakness. The epistle is concluded with admonitions, prayer, and salutations.

In this epistle, St Paul is the *Self-defender*, and the *Reformer*.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Paul's troubles in Asia : his sincerity towards Corinth.
2. Of the excommunicated person : Paul's success in preaching.
3. The glory of the gospel far above that of the law.

CHAP.

4. Paul's zeal in preaching : his sufferings and prospects.
5. The effects of the hope of glory on Paul's ministry.
6. His unwearied labours, and warnings against unbelievers.
7. Paul's joy at the reformation of the Corinthians.
8. Contribution for the saints strongly urged.
9. Exhortations to abound in liberality.
10. The vast superiority of Paul over the false teachers.
11. Paul's account of himself, and of the false teachers.
12. Paul states his revelations, and glories in his infirmities.
13. Warns the Corinthians to reform before he visits them.

Observations on II. Corinthians.

This epistle is not written in any systematical order. The main drift of it is this. The apostle has from beginning to end an eye to the turbulent, self-important teachers at Corinth ; and expresses his indignation against the mischief and confusion which they, through their ambition and worldly wisdom, had produced in that church. The apostle uses all the means in his power to bring the people back into the obedience of Christ ; and tries, for their benefit, to re-establish himself in their esteem and affection, by proving that he had preached the doctrines of Christ with all fidelity and success. He, all the way, blends instructions, exhortations, arguments, rebukes and threats, that by all means he might counteract the injurious influence of the false teachers, and restore the church to union, holiness, and glory. The substance of the epistle may be divided into these three points.—1. St. Paul's defence of himself and of his apostleship.—2. His counsels and exhortations to the Christians at Corinth to reform their church.—3. His threats against those that should continue impenitent, stubborn, and disorderly.

I. St. Paul's DEFENCE of himself and his apostleship.—The main charges which were alleged against him by his adversaries in the church were these.—1. That he was guilty of levity and inconstancy in his promises.—2. Of severity and tyranny in discipline.—

3. Of preaching light doctrines, and injurious to the law.—4. That he was defective in talents and elocution.—We have his reply to all these charges.

1. They charged the apostle with *levity and inconstancy*, asserting that he promised to return to Corinth, but never came. Paul assigns the reasons of his delay. His great troubles in Asia had long hindered him; and besides, he wished to give them time to set their church in order before he came, that he might spare the rod, and meet them in comfort. He also delayed, that the excommunicated person might repent and be restored before his arrival. And he appeals to his manner of preaching among them, to prove that he had not used lightness. Chap. i.

2. They charged him also with *severity and tyranny*, because of the sentence he had passed against the incestuous person. But St. Paul pleads that, so far from being too severe, lenity and kindness were manifested in this business. It was done in love to the soul of the guilty person, that he might be saved; in love to them, who were grieving on his account; and with a view that Paul and they might meet with joy and not with sorrow. As a farther proof of his tenderness, he wrote the first time with tears, and now he receives the penitent with delight, and for their sakes forgives him all he had done. Chap. ii.

3. They charged him with preaching *light doctrines* which destroy the authority of the law of God.—Here Paul enters on a most able defence of himself and the doctrines he preached, and spends three whole chapters in proving the truth and excellence of his doctrine, showing what he suffered in preaching it, and what prospects it opened before him. He proves that the gospel he preached is the word of life and of righteousness, the ministry of the spirit which far exceeds in glory the ministry of the law; that his doctrine had been abundantly blessed by God to a great number, and had changed them into the image of God. Chap. iii. He then shews in what *manner* he preached this gospel:—that it was with diligence and fidelity, and in the most

effectually convincing manner to all but to those that would perish ; that he preached Christ, and not himself ; and that the spirit of God comforted and blessed him in his work, and gave him the sweetest hope of a glorious resurrection. He then reminds the Corinthians of the many and deep sufferings which he had endured in preaching the gospel. Chap. iv.—The *glorious prospects* which the gospel opens before them that believe it are adduced in proof of its truth. The dying love of Jesus breaks the apostle's heart, and dread of his anger overwhelms his soul. He is therefore most earnestly striving to restore sinners to God through Jesus Christ. Chap. v. So far he proceeds in his defence of himself and his apostleship, of his doctrine and spirit.

4. As to the charge of his being a *babbler* of low attainments, defective in knowledge, and contemptible in speech, he answers it at full length, and sufficiently confutes it in chap. x, xi, xii, where he shows, that though his manner of preaching was studiously plain, yet that his knowledge in the mysteries of Christ was truly deep ; that he was in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles ; and that the weapons which he used were mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.

II. St. Paul's counsels and **EXHORTATIONS** to the Christians at Corinth to reform their church before he came among them. Chap. vi—xii.

1. He exhorts them, first of all, not to abuse the great privileges which they enjoyed ; but to *walk worthy of the gospel*. And for their direction and encouragement, he, in a very pathetic manner, sets before them his own example. He pressingly urges them, by various arguments, to have no intimate connection, by marriage or any close friendship, with infidels and graceless persons. Chap. vi.

2. He expresses great joy and *thankfulness* on account of the reformation which his former letter had produced among them, of which Titus had informed him, and is glad that the sorrow which he had occasioned for

a time had produced that repentance which leads to lasting consolation. And now he expresses his confidence in them. Chap. vii.

3. He exhorts them to make *contributions* for the distressed saints in Judea; to abound in their liberality with all cheerfulness, which he urges by various motives, especially by the example of the Lord Jesus, who was rich, and became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Chap. viii. ix.

4. Lastly, he strongly exhorts them to *cleave unto himself* as the Apostle of Jesus Christ, and to depart from the false apostles, who had poisoned their minds, corrupted their morals, and marred all their glory; and with a view to win them back, he beseeches them, by the grace of Jesus, to consider the power of the ministry which was committed unto him. He describes the false apostles to the life; and proves his great superiority over them every way—in doctrine, in talents, in labours, in sufferings, and in revelations; yet he declares that he glories only in Christ. Chap. x. xi. xii. Thus far the practical part of the epistle.

III. St. Paul THREATENS all impenitent offenders at Corinth with some severe judgments.

1. At the close of chap. xii. he expresses his *fears*, that when he comes among them he shall find some that have not reformed, and that he shall be under the painful necessity of inflicting punishment upon them. He proceeds in chap. xiii. to call on them to *repent* and turn to Christ; and he allows them a little more time to repent. But those who he shall after all find impenitent, he threatens with some miraculous judgments, which he has power to inflict by virtue of his commission from Christ, according to Matt. xviii. 18.

2. He assigns his reasons for using such keen language in his letter: it is, that he may not use any severity when he comes among them. He exhorts them tenderly to reform, and prays earnestly that the grace, love, and blessings of the eternal Trinity may be with them all.

IV. This epistle contains SOLEMN WARNINGS TO

churches. It has not only very precious doctrines, interspersed through every chapter; but very instructive lessons are given unto us by the state of things at Corinth, particularly the following.

1. We see how very soon a flourishing Christian church may *lose its health and beauty*, by being poisoned with false doctrines, and distracted with divisions and fierce contentions. And these things are generally occasioned by forward men of little or no piety, who seek to exalt themselves, and to have the pre-eminence. This mischief often begins with some restless ambitious individual, who by his subtlety and industry proselytes others of a kindred spirit with himself; till, in a gradual progressive manner, the spark becomes a flame, and the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. These turbulent innovators never fail to promise other men "liberty, while they themselves are the servants of corruption." They make a great show in the flesh; affect superior piety, zeal, and wisdom; and by a pompous display of talents, they win upon the unwary and the superficial, and too frequently make a merchandize of numbers who mean well, but have no judgment to direct their steps. St. Paul has wisely given this solemn counsel to the churches.—"I beseech you, brethren, MARK them which cause divisions and offences—and avoid them." Rom. xvi. 17, &c.

2. Our attention is now directed to the *degradation and misery* of a christian church in its divided state, as exemplified in that of the Corinthians. Its "glory is departed;" the fine gold is become dross. Joy and gladness were once heard within her walls; but now wrangling and debates. When the bands of union were broken asunder, peace, harmony, and love took wing and fled away. The christian tempers are laid aside, and angry passions have their full sway in defence of favourite leaders. One cries, What is your Paul to my Apollos? another answers, And what is your Apollos to my Cephas? and thus the beautiful temple erected by the apostle is laid in ruins, and the synagogues of Satan rear their towering heads. Corinth

is become a Babel, and each speaks some new language, which his neighbour understands not. In this confusion the gospel of the kingdom is basely degraded, the worst tempers of the human heart are nourished, and practical ungodliness rushes in like a flood. Oh that men were wise, that they would consider these things, and always keep in mind that Christ is not divided, and that God is never the author of confusion. May we learn wisdom by the folly of the Corinthians, and profit by their sufferings.

3. We see that a decayed backsliding church may be raised from its degraded state, and restored to its purity and glory. This, we have reason to believe, was finally the case at Corinth. Paul's first letter produced very salutary effects. It not only confirmed the faithful, but brought back many who had been carried away. These penitents restored order and strict discipline to the church, and with tears intreated the apostle to return to them. In the conduct of St. Paul towards these Corinthians in their fallen state, we have an admirable pattern. Their distracted state and disorderly conduct filled his soul with sorrow and concern. But he felt as a father, indignant at the gross misconduct of his children, while his bowels melted over them. So far was he from giving himself up to grief, and sinking under his afflictions, that his soul seems to be inspired with fresh energy with every increasing trial. He speedily employs all means in his power to produce union and harmony in the way of truth and grace. He argues, counsels, rebukes, allures, and warns them: and if all this should fail, he threatens to use the great power with which Christ had armed him, in inflicting some signal vengeance on the finally impenitent. Yet being so very desirous to reform, and so reluctant to strike, he delays his return on purpose to give them time to repent. Such repentance in the majority he afterwards lived to see to his great joy.

GALATIANS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THIS epistle may be divided into three equal parts.—1. The two first chapters contain St. Paul's vindication of himself and his apostleship, against the false teachers in Galatia, who maintained that he was not an apostle, and that he had borrowed the gospel from Peter, James, or John.—2. In the two following chapters, he proves, by various and conclusive arguments, that man is justified by faith in Christ, without the deeds of the law; and refutes the false doctrine of the Judaizing teachers, who blended law and gospel together.—3. In the two last chapters, Christians are exhorted to stand fast, and live on Christ alone; to blend nothing with his complete salvation, and faithfully to perform all their duties towards God, their brethren, and all men.

St. Paul is, in this epistle, the *stern and irresistible controversialist*.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Paul a true apostle, and a preacher of the one true gospel.
2. He proves his divine mission, and salvation by grace.
3. Various arguments to prove justification by faith only.
4. The Galatians blamed for going to the law for justification.
5. We must live on Christ by faith, and walk in the Spirit.
6. How Christians must act towards God and one another.

Observations on Galatians.

1. *The History.*—Galatia was an extensive province in Lower Asia, at that time inhabited by Gauls who had migrated from France and settled in that distant land, which they called after their own name. This province abounded with several famous cities. When St. Paul travelled with Silas and Timothy, he was

forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach in these parts. But sometime afterward, (when, it is not certain), he visited that country, and planted churches, probably, in all their great cities, which he at the beginning of this epistle, styles, "The churches of Galatia." During his abode with the Galatians, he gave them the most convincing proofs, by working many mighty miracles among them, of his being a true apostle of Jesus Christ, and sent by him to proclaim the everlasting gospel. The success which attended his preaching in these quarters was very great, and his converts numerous. And these, while he abode with them, so admired and esteemed him, that they would have plucked out their own eyes to serve him. He was called away to plant and to water other churches.

2. *The state of the church.*—Soon after Paul's departure, the churches of Galatia were grievously corrupted by the Judaizing teachers. The churches of Asia at that time swarmed with those fiery zealots for the law of Moses, who, by their zeal and subtilty, filled the churches of Galatia with their false doctrines, and drew multitudes away from the pure gospel which Paul had preached. These Jews were influenced by various motives thus to act. Full of ambition and vain-glory, they aspired to the authority of teachers, though yet very solicitous to shun persecution, and avoid the shame of the cross. They aspired to the honour of preachers, desirous still to keep on good terms with the world, especially with the unconverted Jews. They imposed, therefore, on the churches of Galatia, the necessity of observing both the moral and the ceremonial law, in order to justification; especially circumcision, the ceremonial sabbath, and the new moons: thus blending Judaism and Christianity, law and gospel, faith and works. In order to establish their own credit and authority, they tried by all means to ruin the reputation of St. Paul, and pleaded that he was not an apostle of Christ, that he had not received the gospel from Christ, and that he was for setting aside the highest privileges of the Jews. At length,

by their subtlety they prevailed. Paul sunk in the opinion of the churches of Galatia; the purity and simplicity of the gospel was perverted; and the people went after their new teachers. When St. Paul saw all Galatia in a flame, and in danger of being devoured by this false fire, his just indignation kindled against the authors of the mischief; and grief and pity filled his heart for those who were drawn away from the pure gospel they had once cordially embraced. With a view to correct all these errors, and to restore purity and order in the Galatian churches, Paul sent them this epistle.

II. On this masterly epistle we offer the following remarks.

1. The grand doctrine which the apostle here so strenuously insists upon is this:—" *That man is justified by faith alone*, and that he cannot possibly, in whole or in part, be justified by the deeds of the law." This is the grand gospel doctrine, which was firmly maintained, and published every where by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It is the established doctrine of the Church of England, and it is embraced by most of our Dissenting brethren. It was the doctrine of all the reformed characters on the Continent, and has been that of the church of Christ in all ages. In the language of Luther, " It is the doctrine with which the church of God stands or falls." It behoves us then to understand well what this doctrine is, and cordially to embrace it. It is to this purpose:—That a sinner is justified before God by a *perfect* righteousness, and that he cannot possibly be justified by any other. That the sinner has no such righteousness of his own, nor is it in his power to procure it. There is such a righteousness for him in the Saviour of sinners. Jesus by his perfect obedience to the whole law for man, and by his perfect satisfaction to the law for the sins of men, has procured for us a spotless and perfect righteousness. This in some way must be made ours before we can be justified by a just God: and the way which God hath appointed to make the righteousness

of his Son to be the righteousness of the sinner, is by giving the sinner the *grace of faith*, and enabling him to believe with the heart in Jesus. This believing is looking to Jesus for the whole of our salvation; cordially embracing the complete salvation which he hath procured for us by his life and death; surrendering ourselves entirely unto him to be saved in the way of pure unbounded grace; and relying altogether on what Christ hath done and suffered in our place in law, as our bounden surety, for pardon of sins, for peace with heaven, and for a just title to all the blessings of salvation. In the article of justification, the penitent believer brings nothing with him to recommend him to the favour of God, but a soul sensible of its lost and helpless condition, made willing to be saved in the way of free favour, and to receive eternal life as the gift of God. He contributes no more towards his justification before God, than he contributes towards his own creation, or to the redemption of the world. The sinner's merits have no existence except in the proud conceit of a blind and carnal heart. When the sinner comes truly to believe on the Saviour, the righteousness of Jesus is *imputed* unto him, as our sins were imputed unto Jesus, when he died as our surety. "He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "On him were laid the iniquities of us all," "and he is made of God unto us Righteousness." Without this doctrine no sinner can be saved; and without clear views of it, no saint can have much comfort.

2. Of all the doctrines of Christ, none is more strongly or generally *objected* to, by an unbelieving world, than the doctrine of justification by faith, through the imputed righteousness of the Saviour: nor need we wonder at this; for no doctrine is so opposite to the pride of man, (who would have something to glory in) as that which robs him of all merit, and makes him a debtor to grace for every particle in salvation, leaving him no room to boast, save in the cross of Christ the Lord. Multitudes every age have set

their faces against this doctrine altogether, and openly denied it to be a doctrine of God: and many more have frittered it away, by altering and adding to it, till it became quite another gospel. But after all the inventions of men to get rid of it, it stands firm as an eternal rock; and all the high waves of opposition which beat upon it must die away in foam.

The *Jews* as a nation have discovered a deep-rooted aversion to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, through the imputed righteousness of Jesus; though their brazen serpent and city of refuge, their paschal lamb and scape goat, should have taught them better. Yet this might be expected from the conditions of their temporal covenant, where rewards were promised to the obedient. But the leaven of the Pharisees, who went about to establish their own righteousness, had deeply infected their whole nation. When any of the Jews became Christians, they retained much of this old leaven, and insisted on the necessity of obedience to the moral, and especially to the ceremonial law, in order to justification. With this self-righteous doctrine, the Jewish Christians greatly corrupted and deeply afflicted all the churches in the apostolic age. This fatal error, St. Paul strenuously resists in all his epistles, especially those to the Romans and the Galatians.

In the *present day* and in our land, thousands of priests and people have drank deeper into the Jewish error of self-merit, than in the apostolic doctrine of justification through faith, by the imputation of the Saviour's righteousness. And this must always be the case, where self is not subdued by the reign of grace. Sinners will go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of God. Thus they forsake their own mercies, set aside the way of salvation, and turn to another gospel.—Let any christians now determine with Paul, “To be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,” and these

men, for this very reason, will instantly be branded with the name of Calvinists, and charged with holding "Monstrous doctrines," which subvert the faith, and lead to licentiousness. The doctrine of salvation by grace is rejected, not because men cannot see it in the scripture; but because they do not relish it in their hearts. It is too humiliating for the self-righteous, who scorn to come in the same way with the chief of sinners to obtain mercy. But after all, he that bringeth his price in his hand shall be thrust from the throne :— "God will send the rich empty away."

3. All that depart from the doctrine established by St. Paul in this epistle, *leave the gospel of Christ* and turn to another gospel. Now the doctrine of the apostle is this, "cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them." But no man hath kept the whole law; therefore by the law can no man living be justified: and if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain. The office of the law is to convince of sin, and not to take sin away. It is the office of Christ alone to take away sin. St. Paul having proved that all men are under the curse, where it is not possible for them to be justified by any obedience that they can render to that law which will admit of nothing short of perfection, proceeds to show, that the only way that God ever ordained for the sinner to be justified is by believing in his dear Son, and that all the works and merits of man are shut out, in our justification before God.—This epistle is a warning to all Christians now, full as much as it was to the Jews in Galatia. The moment any leave the doctrine of justification by faith without works, they forsake the gospel of God, and turn to another gospel; and Paul repeatedly pronounces them *accursed*. Yet thousands will not take warning, but still continue to prate about their good works to recommend them to the favour of God, and to prepare them to obtain mercy. Let such men know, that by joining their own works to the grace of faith in the act of justification, they offer unto God the greatest insult by

perverting the gospel of his Son, and turning to another gospel which can never save them, but will seal them under the curse.

III. Exhortations to produce the fruits of faith.

1. After Paul had established the doctrines of grace, and proved that we are saved by faith which is the gift of God, he proceeds to exhort all believers to produce the *fruits of faith*, and to adorn the Gospel of God by a holy life. The faith which Paul preaches does not lead men to licentiousness, but to holiness. He spends the two last chapters of this epistle in exhorting those that are saved by faith to be zealous of good works, and faithfully to discharge all Christian duties, several of which are here specified.—They who object to justification by faith alone, and assert that this doctrine leads men to neglect their duty to God and their neighbour, give us the most convincing proof that they themselves do not understand what faith in Christ means: for the very nature of divine faith is obedience to God, and it never was guilty of one act of disobedience. Wherever we come short of duty, it is from the defect of faith and the prevalence of corruption. Make faith perfect, and the obedience of the Christian will be perfect also. Faith in Christ can no more lead to sin, than the sun can cause darkness, whose very nature is to give light. Nay, faith in the blessed Jesus is the only principle in the world that can obey God: every other principle from its very nature must rebel. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. viii. 7. There are only these two principles in any man, Divine faith, and the carnal mind. Which of these two will obey God best, let the revilers of faith themselves determine, or rather let them hear the voice of scripture which declares, “That without faith it is impossible to please God.” The very best productions of unrenewed nature are nothing better than varnished sins, which the Lord rejects; “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” We therefore draw this conclusion—that all the good works or service which God accepts,

must proceed from that faith which justifieth the believer in Christ: and that fallen nature under all its greatest refinement can produce nothing but what must be rejected of God, because it is not of faith: therefore it is sin. If the principle be carnal, the actions which proceed from it must be carnal also. The tree and its fruit will ever be of the same nature.

2. The *agreement and the difference* between the advocates and the opponents of justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law, seem to be as follow. They agree as to the *necessity* of good works, and the duty of man to obey his God. Both declare that man should have respect unto all the commandments, and walk in the law of the Lord blameless. They agree therefore as to this: but they widely disagree as to the *place* they assign to good works.

They who *oppose* justification by faith alone maintain that works acceptable to God may be done in the state of nature, where there is no saving faith in Christ: in other words, that man can please God without faith; that a corrupt nature can produce the fruits of righteousness; and that a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, can do him service. Nay, farther, they make their good works to produce faith, and to share with it in their justification before God. And except they are allowed to make good works partially their Saviour, they cannot see the use of them. This system is so full of absurdities that it confutes itself. It is nothing short of pleading that good fruit may be gathered from a corrupt tree; grapes from thorns, figs from thistles. But the scripture asserts, that the tree must first be made good before the fruit can be so, and that all obedience acceptable to God is the obedience of faith. But, all men have not faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

On the other hand, the *advocates* for salvation by grace plead for the necessity of good works on the following grounds. They assert that salvation as the gift of God can never absolve man from his obligation to serve and obey his God; but that it brings him under

deeper obligation than ever to please God in all things. Man, from the nature of his creation and redemption, must remain for ever under the law to Christ, and nothing can absolve him from his duty to do the whole will of God. Besides, the new nature which every believer derives by virtue of his union with Christ is in direct opposition to all sin, and seeks its happiness in opposing sin and serving the Lord. The very nature of faith is to obey God in all things, as much as it is the nature of the vine to produce grapes. The faith that lays hold on Christ, kindles love in the heart towards Christ: and this love will make the believer to delight in the law of the Lord, and run in the way of his commandments. The souls in heaven serve God, not that they may be saved, but because they are saved: the same principle in the saints on earth will operate in the same way.—Upon the whole, we see that the new nature is as much for serving God, as the old nature is for serving sin. We see also, that merit-mongers in general will cry up good works, but leave it to those who live by faith to practise them.

EPHESIANS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THIS epistle may be divided into two equal parts. The first three chapters are doctrinal, the last three are practical.—1. The apostle, after a short and affectionate salutation, breaks out in loud thanksgivings to God, for raising his people into such an exalted state as to possess all blessings in Christ, which flow from the ocean of eternal love, according to the pleasure of the divine mind; praying most fervently that they may grow abundantly in the knowledge of the exalted Saviour. He shows their former state to have been the most miserable and perilous that could possibly be

on earth : that grace alone had delivered them from that state, and united them to the church of God. He dwells with peculiar delight on the calling of the Gentiles, showing that this mystery "had been hid from ages, but was now made manifest," to the admiration of angels. He earnestly prays that all believers may abound in the knowledge and love of Christ, and be deeply rooted in every grace.—2. He exhorts them to live as Christians ought to live, in love and unity ; to possess all Christian tempers ; to exercise every gift for the edification of the body of Christ ; to depart from all iniquity, and practise holiness in the fear of the Lord. He exhorts them to perform all relative duties, and to put on the whole armour of God.

St. Paul, in this epistle, is the *loving father* and the *faithful pastor*.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The high privileges of saints, flowing from God's electing love.
2. Man ruined by sin, saved by grace, and raised to honour.
3. Salvation to the Gentiles, for whom Paul earnestly prays.
4. Exhortation to unity, to edify the body of Christ, and be holy.
5. Exhortations to love, purity, spirituality, and to relative duties.
6. Exhortations to relative duties, and to put on the armour.

Observations on Ephesians.

1. *The History.*—Ephesus was the most considerable city and metropolis of Lower Asia. Famous first for the sin of witchcraft and idolatry, especially the worship of Diana, and also for persecution, lewdness, and drunkenness : then for strong pity and zeal for Christ : and finally for coldness and declension, which Paul foresaw would be the case after his decease. See Acts xx. 29. The Apostle in his way from Athens through Corinth to Jerusalem preached at Ephesus, and sometime afterward returned thither again, and stayed with them three years, during which time he established a very flourishing church, with a great number of

dependent churches throughout all the region round about. See Acts xviii—xx. When he was at Miletus, he sent for the pastors of the church at Ephesus, and gave them a strict charge to guard against the false teachers that should arise after his departure, “to draw away disciples after them;” and afterwards when he was prisoner at Rome, he sent to the Ephesian churches this admirable and affectionate epistle, to confirm them in the faith, and to guard them against all errors, especially against blending any thing with the grace of God in man’s salvation. Timothy was appointed the first Bishop of this church, and as some think, John the evangelist succeeded him in that office.

2. *The state of the churches at Ephesus.* At the time this epistle was sent to them, they were evidently in a pure, peaceable, and flourishing condition. At Corinth there were schisms, heresies, and scandalous practices. In Galatia there were false doctrines, the law and gospel were blended together, to the supplanting of the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith without the deeds of the law. But at Ephesus none of these evils had as yet appeared. They ‘lived in unity and godly love,’ and stood fast in adhering to an unadulterated gospel. The Judaizing teachers, the common disturbers of the churches, had not hitherto troubled Ephesus. St. Paul had the bowels of an affectionate father towards the Ephesians, and was deeply concerned for their future welfare. Fearing that they would be discouraged by his bonds, and grow weary of the gospel and the cross of Christ, or that false teachers would hereafter trouble them, he writes this epistle, near the close of his life, to confirm them in the doctrines of Christ, to arm them against errors, to animate them in their Christian warfare, and to encourage them to go forward in all holy conversation and godliness. This epistle is full of paternal affection, ardour, and pathos, which probably was owing in a great measure to the apostle’s own state of mind at the time. Expecting soon to be offered up and be with Christ, his soul was filled with love and zeal for his

Lord, and the interest of his kingdom on earth. He pours out his whole heart in torrents of affection towards the people of his God. And besides this he was now writing to one of the best and purest of churches, whom he had no occasion to rebuke, as there were no false doctrines, no divisions, no ungodly practices to condemn. No: all was evangelical, orderly, and harmonious. Writing to such a people, and on such subjects, the Apostle's heart overflows with holy affections, which renders this epistle most interesting and delightful to all Christians who deeply enter into its spirit.

II. This admirable epistle is divided into two equal parts—doctrinal, and practical.

FIRST. The DOCTRINAL part is most interesting to us all, as it contains the grand leading doctrines of the gospel of Christ. Some of which are the following.

1. *Eternal election.*—All that obtain salvation were chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world. They were chosen to be made holy in order to be saved for ever. They were chosen, not because God foresaw that they would of themselves be more holy than others; but that they are made holy in consequence of their election in Christ, and “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” How vain then is the common cavil of unbelievers against this doctrine, who will tell us, “that it matters not what men are—if they are elected they must be saved, let them be ever so unholy.” These men have to learn that God hath chosen his people to be made holy in the way to heaven.

2. *Predestination.*—God hath fore-ordained that those whom he hath chosen in his Son, should be adopted and made his children by faith in the Saviour, and should enjoy all the high privileges of this near relation to himself. His motive for doing this he found in himself, and not in them. He acted according to the good pleasure of his own will. God has no law to govern and direct his actions, but his own holy nature; and his will and pleasure is law to all creation.

Presumption itself would blush to say that any man merited or deserved adoption into God's family; and if it is not of merit, it must be of grace. And so we read that God fore-ordained to give adoption to his chosen, that he might shew forth the glory of his free grace in the most conspicuous manner to the view of the whole universe. And of this grace, they that are adopted will eternally sing. And every one that is saved, will say through time and eternity, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

3. *Redemption*.—All that are brought into a state of salvation, were once under sin and condemnation, without any power to deliver themselves. Christ shed his blood and paid the price of their redemption, and by his grace brought them into union with himself, pardoned all their sins, and gave them a title to the inheritance in heaven. And thus he gives them complete redemption from guilt and misery, according to his own will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

4. *Vocation*.—In order to be made partakers of Redemption from sin, we must be effectually called of God; our hearts must hear and obey the voice of grace in the gospel, by the influence of the Holy Ghost. The Gentile converts at Ephesus are here reminded; that they, as well as converted Jews, were inwardly called of God unto salvation; for which the Apostle thanks God, and prays that they may grow in the knowledge of Jesus, in order to have closer union with him. In this effectual calling, in restoring us from death to life, God puts forth the same almighty power as he did in raising Christ from the dead. Chap. i.

5. *The state of nature*.—In order that we may see the greatness of the mercy and grace of God in calling us into a state of salvation, we are shown here the misery of the state we are in by nature. A state of wrath, a state of death, slaves to sin, the captives of Satan, enemies to God, afar off, strangers to happiness, without a Saviour, and without hope.

6. *The sinner saved by grace*.—By grace are ye saved, by grace alone: and this grace is infinite as the nature

of God, like a sea without a bottom or a shore. When we see sinners saved for ever, we know by this that God is rich in mercy, and that the love wherewith he hath loved us is a most vehement flame, which "many waters cannot quench." The sinner's redemption, new creation, renovation, and final salvation, must be of grace. And the grace that saves and glorifies fallen man is grace indeed! All the ages to come will resound with the praises of the saints for the exceeding riches of his grace towards them in Christ Jesus. For the benefits they derive from God in the rivers of his grace, are high as the throne of heaven, and durable as eternity. All the saints, whether by nature Jews or Gentiles, are in Christ, created anew in Christ, exalted into heavenly places in Christ, brought nigh and reconciled to God through Him, and made his temples and habitation for ever through the Spirit, and the blood of Jesus. Such are the riches of the saints, which flow from the grace and terminate in the glory of their God and Saviour. Chap. ii.

7. *The calling of the Gentiles.*—The Jews under the Old Testament did not understand that we Gentiles should ever be admitted into the church of God. Though this was plainly revealed in their Scriptures, yet this mystery of grace was hid from them through their unbelief. Now the thing is done. The wall of partition is no more: Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ, fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promises. All the hosts of heaven admire and adore the grace which flows at last to us poor Gentiles in the ends of the earth. May we be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. Chap. iii. Thus far the doctrinal part of the epistle.

Secondly. THE PRACTICAL part follows, wherein the apostle exhorts the Ephesians, and all Christians, to perform the duties of religion from gratitude to God for his grace and gifts in salvation.

1. He exhorts us to practise the *general duties* of Christianity. He enjoins us to be humble and meek, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. He calls aloud on us to be one, as Christ is one; to be holy, to deny all ungodliness, and to live to Christ alone. He urges us to speak the truth, to avoid anger, to be diligent, to use profitable language, to love the brethren, and to abstain from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, as becometh saints.

2. He next exhorts us to perform *relative duties*.—There are duties peculiar to different situations and relations in life; and christians would do well to read often and mark carefully the scriptures which belong to their own particular situation and circumstances in society, and there learn how they are to act so as to honour God in their rank and station. Let the husband and wife, the parent and child, the master and servant, hear every one for himself what the Lord God saith unto him.

3. He exhorts us in the last place, to put on the *whole armour of God*, in order that we may be enabled to perform the duties we owe to God and man, and to overcome the enemies of our salvation. We have seen that this epistle is both doctrinal and practical. Without the doctrine, we know not what to practice; and without putting the doctrine in practise, we learn it in vain. Yet we can never practice holiness without the grace of God to incline and assist us: and to conquer our enemies is impossible in any way but in the way of faith. Therefore let us put on “the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day.”

PHILIPPIANS.

. The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

ST. PAUL thanks God that the Philippians are in such an excellent state, and with all the affection of a joyful father, prays fervently for their continuance and progress in grace. He counsels them not to be disengaged at his sufferings, and animates them to adorn the gospel and strive together for the faith. He bids them live as becomes the gospel, with all humility and self-denial, after the example of Christ, to live in unity, and to follow holiness ; that he and they may rejoice in the day of Christ. He sends Timotheus and Epaphroditus unto them, and promises to go himself. He warns them against false teachers, who mingle law and gospel ; and shows how he himself had given up all things for Christ, and that nothing would satisfy him but to be with Christ in glory ; and he exhorts them to follow his example. He concludes with many excellent counsels and exhortations, and with thanks for their repeated bounty to him, as the fruit of their faith.

St. Paul is, in this epistle, the *fond father* calling on his beloved children to follow him in holiness to heaven.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Paul's affections expressed by prayers and sufferings.
2. Exhortations to follow Christ in dispositions and actions,
3. Warnings to avoid false teachers, and to press onward.
4. General exhortations to duties : their care of Paul commanded.

Observations on Philippians.

1. *The history.*—Philippi was a very considerable city of Macedonia, on the confines of Thracia, in the fields where Julius Cæsar conquered Pompey, and where afterwards Augustus obtained the victory over Brutus and Cassius, and near the Pagan mountains, which were famous for gold mines and springs of water. When St. Paul was at Troas, he saw in a vision a man of Macedonia, who said unto him, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” St. Paul concluding that this invitation was from the Lord, immediately went through Samothracia into Philippi, which was the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony; and there he tarried certain days, preaching the gospel of the kingdom with great success. Lydia, the Jailor, and others were converted. Here St. Paul laid the foundation of a very flourishing church, which most probably, like the rest of the apostolic churches, had many branches, or daughter churches, through all the colony round about. St. Paul left Luke and Timothy there to carry on the work which he had begun; and he himself, after a time, returned to visit the Philippians once, if not more.

2. *The state of this church* at the time the apostle wrote to them, and the *occasion* of the epistle.—When Paul was prisoner at Rome, the Philippians sent him rich presents by the hands of Epaphroditus, their chief pastor. Whilst Epaphroditus stayed at Rome assisting the apostle in his care for all the churches, his excess of labours brought on him a dangerous illness, which caused the deepest grief to the Philippians: he also grieved to hear of their distress on his account. St. Paul therefore sent Epaphroditus back when he could but ill spare him, in order to relieve the affectionate Philippians and their beloved pastor from their mutual sorrow; and also to thank them for their care of him in his bonds. Such was the occasion of this epistle which

Paul sends to the Philippians by the hands of Epaphroditus.—From the whole tenor of the epistle, it evidently appears, that their church at this time was in a very pure, orderly, and flourishing condition. The apostle finds no fault at all with them. Here is not a shadow of reproof on any account whatever. No divisions, errors, or immoralities are once mentioned as existing amongst them. On the contrary, the whole epistle is the language of high commendation and fervent affections, such as the kindest of fathers would write to the best of children.—The drift of what the apostle writes is to confirm them in the faith, to encourage them to walk worthy of the gospel, to warn them against seducers, to quicken them to divers Christian duties, to testify his gratitude for their liberality to him, and to express his tender regard for their comfort and welfare.

II. The following observations may deserve some attention, and be of use to the reader.

1. This epistle is not written in a systematical order, but in the way of free address, and chiefly in the form of exhortations. It has no *doctrines* dwelt upon in an argumentative manner; yet it abounds with a variety of very important doctrines interspersed through every part of it, which are introduced naturally as occasions require. And it is worthy of notice, that when any great doctrine is introduced, some Christian duty is annexed to it, which plainly shows that the end of doctrine is godly practice, in order to happiness. The whole epistle abounds also with *exhortations* to all believers to stand fast in the faith, to follow holiness, to make progress in grace, to discharge all Christian duties, and to live as becometh saints.—These duties are inculcated on gospel principles, and enforced by the best and greatest *examples*. The example of Jesus himself is set before us, as a pattern of meekness, humility, self-denial, benevolence, and loving kindness. Let the same mind be in us, as was in Christ Jesus. And Paul propounds his own example also for our imitation, in giving up all things for Christ, and in

pressing on with all earnestness in the Christian race. Let as many as are grounded in the faith, be thus minded.—In different parts of the epistle, St. Paul pours out his most fervent *prayers* for the welfare and prosperity of believers, knowing that without the blessing of God, all doctrines, exhortations, and examples would be set before them in vain. And these prayers show the fervour of the apostle's piety; his great solicitude for the welfare of the children of grace, and for the increase of Christ's kingdom.

2. In the conduct of the Philippians we have an admirable pattern for every *gospel church* on earth. View them which way you will, they appear lovely, and invite us to tread in their steps. They received the gospel at first with all gladness, drank deep into the very life and spirit of it, and put themselves under the dominion of its grace. They adhered stedfastly to the pure gospel as delivered by the apostle, without alloy or mixture of error. In exhorting them to stand fast, he corrects nothing in their creed or principle. Their lives were upright and holy, as their doctrine was evangelical. They adorned the doctrine of God in all things, and attended diligently to the duties of their station. Not one act of misconduct is mentioned or alluded to in all the epistle. The closest union and the strictest harmony were observed among themselves. There was no schism in the body; no party spirit troubled them: but unity and love pervaded the whole church. Their conduct towards their spiritual fathers and pastors was admirable to a very high degree. When their father Paul was in prison for the gospel, they felt as loving children do when the best of parents suffer the most pungent grief. And for his support they sent him a liberal supply, in the most respectful manner, by Epa-phroditus their excellent pastor. And when he, their beloved pastor, fell ill through excess of labours, they grieved and wept bitterly, as one mourneth for his only son; and on his return in health, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Such were the Philippians. And if Paul found it necessary to give such pressing ex-

hortations to a people that so faithfully discharged their duties, how much more necessary are exhortations to professing Christians, who are careless and negligent.

3. In St. Paul and Epaphroditus, we have the most admirable pattern for all the *ministers* of Christ. Their conduct every way towards the Philippians was such as became the ambassadors and servants of the Lord Christ ; and what all pastors should endeavour to imitate, in order to be useful in the Lord's vineyard. St. Paul's whole soul is engaged in his Master's work : it is his meat and drink to plant and water churches. His concern for the welfare of the people of God is remarkable. He rejoices with them that rejoice, and weeps with them that weep. When he hears of the prosperity of the Philippians, his soul overflows with gratitude ; and he prays most earnestly that they may still prosper more and more. He takes all pains to inform their minds in the knowledge of the doctrines of Christ ; and exhorts them with all fidelity to attend to their duties, and to practise holiness in the fear of the Lord. He suits his discourse to the capacity and circumstances of the people he is teaching : and in addressing those that obey the gospel, he speaks as one that embraces them in the arms of his affections. He watches over them with all tender care and concern, and warns them of dangers in time. He goes before the flock, sets an example to the believers, and saith unto them, " follow me, as I follow Christ." He is indefatigable in his labours of love ; and when he suffers, he feels more for the flock than for himself. In all these things, Epaphroditus seems to follow the example of the great Apostle ; and they are both excellent patterns for all the shepherds of Israel.

3. *How happy and blessed are the ministers and churches* that keep their places and do their duty, after the example of the pastors and people at Philippi ! Here the power of truth, faith, and piety prevailed. Nothing but union, love, and harmony was known among them. They entered happily into the enjoyment of their high privileges, rejoiced over each other's

welfare, and sympathized together in all trials and sufferings. Pastors and people with union of effort carried on the work of the Lord, which prospered exceedingly in their hands. We see by all this, what blessed fruits the gospel produces where it is cordially believed and faithfully acted upon. May we drink of its spirit, observe its rules, and partake of its blessings; that the world may be convinced that there is truth and excellency in our religion, and that God may be glorified in us and by us, through Jesus Christ.

C O L O S S I A N S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THIS epistle may be divided into two equal parts.—The two first chapters are doctrinal, the two last practical.—St. Paul thanks God for the good state of the Colossians, and prays for their increase in every grace. He describes the personal and mediatorial glory of Christ, in whom all perfections dwell. He shows that our salvation in Christ is complete, and that we are to live on him alone, and add nothing to him. He rejoices in his labours and sufferings, as the apostle of the Gentiles. Paul prays earnestly for the churches he had not visited; rejoices in their order; exhorts them to steadfastness; to guard against deceivers; and to cleave faithfully to Jesus, in whom we have all blessings and conquests, and therefore should guard against Jewish ceremonies, and Gentile philosophy. Christians are exhorted to love and seek heavenly things, to mortify all carnal lusts and evil tempers, and to be conformed to Christ in all spiritual affections; to live as the word directs, and do all in the name of Jesus. General and particular duties of Christians. Particular religious characters spoken of. Salutations.

In a short way, thus: 1. The glory of Christ, and the completeness of his salvation. 2. That Christians must live on Christ and add nothing to him. 3. That their hearts and lives must be devoted to him in all holiness. St. Paul is in this epistle *the preacher of Christ and his salvation.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The good state of the Colossians; the glory of Christ.
2. We must live on Christ alone, and avoid all deceptions
3. Rules for heavenly dispositions, and godly conversation.
4. On prayer, walk, and speecch: religious characters.

Observations on Colossians.

1. *The history.*—Colossé was a great, rich, and flourishing city in Asia Minor, situated at the conflux of the rivers Meander and Lycus, in the neighbourhood of Laodicea and Hierapolis in Phrygia. Eusebius and others report that these three cities fell by one and the same earthquake, soon after Paul's death. It is very doubtful whether St. Paul himself ever visited Colossé. But the church here was gathered under the ministry of Epaphras (or Epaphroditus) an eminent evangelist, delegated by the apostle to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. But at the time this epistle was written, Epaphras probably was confined as a prisoner at Rome. Nevertheless the word of God was not bound.

2. *The state of the Church.*—It evidently appears to have been in a very flourishing state like that at Ephesus, or Philippi, and to have become eminent and famous among the churches of Asia. We see that the epistle abounds far more in commendations and affectionate exhortations than in reproofs and warnings. Paul thanks God for their faith in Christ, love to the saints, and the fruits of righteousness which they produced; and he rejoices exceedingly in beholding their order, the steadfastness of their faith in Christ,

their union, zeal, and love, and their hope of glory. No errors in doctrine, no divisions in the church, nor any acts of misconduct are once alluded to as existing among them. Yet excellent as they were, counsels and exhortations were not in vain, and the apostle thought it necessary to put them on their guard against seducers and false teachers, and to urge them to press forward in the right way, and to gain ground in grace and godliness.

II. Taking a general view of the epistle, some of its leading and most important doctrines are the following.

1. *The glory of the person and mediation of Christ.*—This takes the lead of all the doctrines of Christianity: this subject above all others should be well understood by us. We must see the glory of the Saviour before we can see the glory of his salvation; because every thing in salvation derives its excellence from the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace. No where in all the Scriptures is the glory of the great Redeemer set forth in a more exalted strain, or in more sublime description than in this epistle, except it be in the vision given to St. John, Rev. i. He is here described as the image of the invisible God, and as the Creator of heaven and earth, who made all things for himself, and by whom all things consist. He is said to be before all things, and above all things that exist—the head of the universal church, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. May all the redeemed behold the glory of the Redeemer, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

2. *The complete and finished salvation of Jesus Christ.*—His salvation is an entire whole, without one flaw or defect, and so completely finished that nothing can be added to it. All that the Christian has to do is to live upon it as his everlasting all. There is enough for us in Christ. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:” “in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:” in him “dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily.” We see then, that all mercies and blessings, all grace and glory, are

treasured up in Christ for his redeemed people. From this fulness all their wants are supplied.—And what grace or blessing is there which they do not derive from him in whom all fulness for ever dwells ? This epistle alone gives us a long catalogue of the inestimable blessings which flow from the ocean of grace in Christ. Such are the following. From him we derive spiritual understanding to know God, and strength to do his will, to suffer for him, and to enjoy him. It is Christ that delivers us from the powers of darkness, and translates us to the kingdom of God's dear Son. Through his blood and righteousness we have forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. In him we die to sin, in him we live anew. From him we derive all deliverances from evil, all victories over our spiritual enemies, and all meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Christ is all and in all. “Christ in you the hope of glory.” His salvation is finished, and ye are complete in him. Seeing then that all our treasures are in Christ, and that his salvation is perfect and complete, great care should be taken that we never attempt to add to it in any form or degree whatever. We may as well try to add to the extension of the heavens, or the duration of eternity, as to the salvation which is in Christ the Lord. Yet vain man has in all ages been guilty of this folly and wickedness : he wants to have something of his own, in addition to what he receives out of Christ's fulness. This has been attempted in a thousand different ways : and this is what the apostle cautions the Colossians against—that they add not the ceremonies of the Jews, nor the philosophy of the Gentiles, to the doctrines and grace of Christ.

3. *The life of Faith.*—In order to be partakers of the complete salvation of Jesus, and the treasures of grace which are laid up in him for us, we must live by faith upon him : for it is by faith alone that we can draw out of his fulness grace upon grace. And this is what the apostle strongly urges the Colossians and all believers to do. “As ye have received Christ Jesus

the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving." He proceeds to show the variety and inestimable benefits which we derive from Christ by acting faith upon him, such as death unto sin, and life unto righteousness; renovation of heart, forgiveness of all trespasses, and victory over all enemies. No life can answer to the soul but a life of faith on the Son of God, which is going out of one's self to live on the fulness of the Saviour.

4. *The fruits of Faith.*—In the third chapter we are instructed what fruits faith in Christ is to produce. This principle, and this alone, will produce obedience to the will of God. Faith in the Saviour will incline our hearts to love and to seek the things which are above; to mortify all our evil affections; to put off evil tempers, and to put on all holy dispositions; to drink of the spirit of the word, and to obey its precepts. Faith will teach us not only to do what God commands; but to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and for his glory. Faith is the parent of all obedience, the root of every grace, and the guide to all enjoyment. By faith we live, walk, and conquer. And whatever defects appear in the believer, they are the defects of his faith.
"Lord increase our faith."

I. THESSALONIANS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

St. PAUL thanks God for the happy state of the Thessalonians, for the manner they had received the gospel, and for the great and blessed effects it had upon them. He reminds them of his own faithful labours and holy life among them, expresses his gratitude for the manner in which they had received the word, and laments the case of the Jews; but rejoices over the

Thessalonians, whom he expects to meet joyfully in glory. As a proof of his care for them he had sent Timothy to help them forward, whose good report of them had been to him matter of great joy in his deep distresses. He thanks God for what is done, and prays that he himself may yet visit them for their further benefit. He affectionately exhorts them to grow in obedience to Christ, to live in purity and integrity, and to abound in brotherly love and industry. He counsels them to be moderate in their sorrow for them that die in the Lord, because Christ will come to raise them to honour and glory. His coming will be sudden, for which we should prepare. The epistle concludes with divers weighty admonitions, and solemn prayer.

St. Paul is here the *happy father* and the *faithful counsellor*: for the drift of the epistle is to express his gratitude for his success among them, to establish them in the faith, and persuade them to a holy conversation.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Very high commendations of the faithful Thessalonians.
2. How Paul preached : how they believed. He longs for them.
3. His care for them, his joy in them, and his desire to visit them
4. Exhortations to holiness and godliness : of the resurrection.
5. Preparations for Christ's coming : divers admonitions.

Observations on I. Thessalonians.

1. *The history.*—Thessalonica was a very great city, and the metropolis of Macedonia, situate by the sea side. It is now in the possession of the Turks, and called Saloniki, and is one of the most famous cities for trade, especially for India merchandize, in all the Levant. St. Paul and Silas, after they had been ill treated at Philippi, passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, into which Paul entered, and preached that Jesus was the Christ. Some of the Jews

believed, and a great multitude of the Greeks both men and women. But the Jews which believed not, raised a persecution against them, which induced the brethren to send Paul and Silas to Berea; and being followed there by the same Jews, they fled to Athens, where they preached with great success. (See Acts xvii.) Thus the newly planted church at Thessalonica was deprived very early of the apostle's ministry, and left under the care of pastors newly converted in the midst of persecuting Jews and zealous idolaters. The apostle on this account was deeply concerned for their welfare. He sent his faithful fellow-labourer Timothy to visit them and to establish them in the faith. Timothy, after a while, returned to Paul, (who was now at Corinth), and gave him such a good account of the Thessalonians as filled the heart of the apostle with joy and gratitude. He felt a strong desire to visit them, but was hindered; and therefore he wrote this epistle to them. It is, upon the whole, probable, that this was the first epistle that St. Paul wrote to any church; but it is rather doubtful whether it was sent from Corinth or Athens; nor is it very material where it was dated; it is enough for us to know that it was indited by the Holy Ghost, and written for our instruction.

2. *The state of the church.*—It was yet in its infancy, under the care of young and inexperienced pastors, destitute of many advantages, which other churches enjoyed. It was also in a very suffering condition; harassed and distressed by the Jews, who were zealous for the law, as well as by the Gentiles who were equally zealous for idolatry. Yet between these two fires, the infant church at Thessalonica flourished and prospered exceedingly. It evidently appeared to be in an excellent state at the time the apostle wrote this epistle, which strongly breathes a spirit of love and paternal affections. And it is very obvious that Paul considered them equal to any churches in faith and holiness. He found much to commend in them, which he does with gladness of heart. And there is not one point in doc-

trine, spirit, or practice, that he offers to condemn. We therefore conclude, safely, that this church was in a very healthful and thriving state. Oh that all ministers in our day could say as much of the congregations that are under their own immediate care.

II. Remarks on the epistle itself.

No particular doctrine is here handled in a formal argumentative manner, except it be the doctrine of the resurrection; yet the epistle in every part abounds with doctrines and instructions, which are delivered for the most part in the way of commendation or exhortation. In studying the epistle, let us take care that we do not confine it to the Thessalonians, as if it belonged to them exclusively; but let us always keep in mind, that it was “written for our learning, on whom the ends of the world are come.” The Scriptures are the common property of the universal church of Christ throughout all ages. The main design of this epistle is to establish and confirm young Christians in their most holy faith, and to animate them to go forward in the practice of all godliness in the midst of trials and persecutions. And the plan which the Apostle adopts to accomplish this end in the new converts at Thessalonica is as follows.

1. In the way of *high commendation*.—He speaks with great delight of the manner they had received the gospel. This they had done with all readiness, with strong faith, with fervent zeal and affection. He gives thanks to God, for the great grace that had been given to them, and for the special presence of the Holy Spirit in his ministry among them. He rejoices that the gospel came to them in power, and had turned them from idols to the living God; and that their faith was become strong, fruitful, and exemplary. Here all Christians should inquire, how far they resemble the Thessalonians? Chap. i.

2. *The exemplary conduct of St. Paul*.—With a view to strengthen their faith, he puts them in mind of the example he had set before them. He reminds them of his labours among them; of his diligence, sincerity,

and meekness ; of his great zeal and disinterestedness. He reminds them of his holy and spotless conversation among them, and calls to their recollection the power that attended his preaching. He reminds them of what he endured for their sakes from the Jews, and tells them how earnestly he now longs to visit them. All this he does, not in the least with a view to exalt his own name, but to encourage them by his example to be valiant for the truth as it is in Jesus. What a noble pattern for all Christian ministers is here ! Chap. ii.

3. The Apostle's *care for the Thessalonians*.—As he was hindered from visiting them in person, which he earnestly wished to do, he sent his faithful assistant Timothy to comfort and stablish them in the faith ; who, when he returned, gave such a favourable account of the prosperous state of their church, that Paul rejoiced exceedingly, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would direct his way to them, for their mutual comfort and joy in God. Chap. iii.

4. *Exhortations*.—The various duties of all Christians which are here set before us, need not be repeated. Let all Christians read them with attention, and practise them in faith and sincerity, that they may be ready when their Lord cometh. Chap. iv. v.

II. THESSALONIANS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE Apostle thanks God for their growth in faith and love, and encourages them to persevere under persecution, by showing, that Christ will come to destroy the wicked, and to glorify his people in the last day. He warns them not to expect that day immediately, because there must be first a great falling away, and Antichrist must first appear, which he describes in his rise, reign, and ruin. He thanks God for his grace

to the Thessalonians, and prays for their welfare. He exhorts them to several duties, especially to censure disorderly idle persons, and to withdraw from them.

St. Paul is in this epistle the *comforting Instructor* in trying times.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Comforts administered under persecution.
2. Warnings not to believe the coming of Christ to be at hand.
3. Directions how to treat the idle and disorderly.

Observations on II. Thessalonians.

1. No church on earth, however pure and flourishing, shall go without afflictions and trials. It must continue in a militant state and go through tribulation, while it travels through the wilderness in the way to the land of rest ; for it sojourns in an enemy's country. It must be tried in order to be purified. And we must be made like Christ in his death, in order to be like him in the resurrection. The excellent infant church at Thessalonica had three different trials which are common to other churches, viz. : The fire of persecution ; the inroads of error ; and the burden of disorderly persons.

1. *Persecution.*—This fiery trial has been, more or less, the lot of every church of God, from the days of Cain till now ; and it must continue to be so while the two seeds remain in the same world. The seed of the serpent has natural enmity against the seed of the woman. He that is born after the flesh persecutes him that is born after the Spirit. You need never ask to what family a persecutor belongs. Persecution may vary in its form according to circumstances ; but it ever retains the same spirit. It is nothing short of enmity against God, and then against his people in proportion as they resemble their Lord and serve him. As surely as Jesus was hated, so surely also his children will be

hated for his sake. "If they persecute me, they will persecute you," says Christ, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Let all Christians count the cost, and never expect to escape persecution; rather let them try to profit by this furnace, which is ordained to purify the children of grace.—There were two sets of persecutors who molested the church at Thessalonica: the zealots for the law, and the zealots for idolatry. But the Lord made his church to prosper. All that suffer persecution for the name of Jesus will find much to animate, support, and comfort them, by believing the account here given of the latter end of the friends and enemies of Christ, when he comes to judgment. Chap. i.

2. *Errors.*—Blending falsehood with the truths of God, is another deep affliction with which the church has been tried and distressed in every age. Wherever God sends his ambassadors to plant the truth, there Satan will send his agents to plant errors. If the Lord sows good seed, the enemy will sow tares among it. Satan's grand device to stop the progress of truth is to fill the minds of men with mistakes and heresies, and to make his counterfeits pass for the king's coin. Where he cannot crush with persecution, he will try to poison with falsehood. Errors are infinite both in number and progress. And what errors have not been introduced even into the bosom of the church, at one time or another, and in every specious form? The enemy is never at a loss to know what false doctrine is most likely to injure a church, therefore he changes his ground of attack according to the state of things. At Thessalonica, the Christians were full of the love of Christ; Satan sent his agents to persuade them that Christ would come immediately to stand on the earth. St. Paul warns them to beware of this mistake, and proves it to be a mistake, by showing that the prophecies respecting Antichrist must first be fulfilled. He thanks God for their safety, and prays earnestly that Jesus Christ may comfort them. Chap. ii.

3. *Disorderly professors.*—Some instead of working and filling up their station creditably and usefully, were idle gossips and busy bodies in other men's matters, and guilty of various disorders, to the great dishonour and hinderance of the gospel. St. Paul exhorts the faithful to *note* such characters, to censure them, and to hold no communion with them, that by this strict discipline they might be reformed. On the most flourishing trees there will be rotten branches. In the most fruitful vineyard there will be barren trees that cumber the ground. In the most orderly churches there will be some disorderly persons who are a grief to the rest, and an offence to the gospel. To deal with these according to Scripture rules would be attended with inconceivable benefit to the church of Christ, and to the comfort of his children. Thus far St. Paul's epistles to the churches.

The four following epistles were written by St. Paul to particular persons, viz. to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, all three of whom were ministers: the two first were evangelists, a ministerial degree next to apostles. The evangelists planted and watered churches as well as the apostles, who had given them their commission.

I. TIMOTHY.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

ST. PAUL charges Timothy that no false doctrine be suffered to be introduced into the church by the vain teachers of the law. Exhorts him to be steadfast in the pure gospel, an abridgment of which he gives in his own example. He gives directions for the due manage-

ment of public worship : whom to pray for, and in what manner ; and how men and women are to conduct themselves in the church of God. He gives rules respecting church officers, bishops, and deacons, and their qualifications. He foretells future apostasies, and exhorts Timothy to stand fast in the truth and practice of godliness, and to give himself wholly to the ministry. He informs him how to carry himself in his censures and exhortations to all ages and classes of men and women ; bids him highly to esteem worthy presbyters, and to ordain none hastily. He instructs him what to enforce on servants, false teachers, and the rich, and presses him to be faithful to his important trust.

St. Paul is in this epistle the *Bishop of Bishops.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Timothy's work at Ephesus : St. Paul's apostleship.
2. Directions for prayer, and order in public worship.
3. The offices of Bishops and Deacons, and their qualifications.
4. Directions to Timothy in the discharge of his episcopal office.
5. How to act towards ministers and widows : how to ordain.
6. Of servants, false teachers, the rich : charge to Timothy.

Observations on I. Timothy.

I. *Of Timothy.*—His name signifies in Greek, one that honours God. Lystra, a city of Lycaonia in Asia, is thought to be his birth place ; at least there Paul first found him. His father was a Greek, and his mother Eunice a Jewess, both true believers, who gave their son a religious education very early. From a child they trained him up in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures. He was converted under St. Paul's ministry, and became when very young his companion in travels. He was often employed by the apostle to carry messages to distant churches, and was at times left with those

that Paul had planted to carry on the work. Though a very sickly person, he was truly eminent in grace and spiritual gifts, which he faithfully employed in the service of the gospel. He was singular for faith, wisdom, diligence, and temperance. After he was ordained by the apostle, assisted by the presbyters, he conducted himself in so admirable a manner, that he became exceedingly dear to St. Paul, who often makes such honourable mention of him, as to call him his son in the faith, his dearly beloved son, and fellow labourer. He declares that he had no man like-minded; and he frequently joins Timothy's name to his own in addressing churches, and points him out as a pattern for all ministers. After long, laborious, and most faithful services performed by him, the apostle appointed him Bishop over the churches at Ephesus, where probably he was when Paul wrote him this epistle. How long he continued there is very uncertain. When and where he died is equally a subject of doubt. Some say that he suffered martyrdom for his firm resistance to the idolatry of the heathens.

2. *The occasion of the epistle.*—Ephesus was one of the principal churches in all Asia. Paul had committed the ordinary charge of the different branches of that extensive church to the presbytery, and commanded them to feed the church of God which he had purchased with his own blood. Acts xx. And when the apostle was going to Macedonia in Greece, he left Timothy at Ephesus in Asia, appointed him the superintendant or bishop over all the Presbytery and the whole church there, and ordered him to reside for a considerable time at Ephesus to regulate the affairs of the church, and to perfect the work which he had begun. No man could be better qualified for this important station than Timothy; for having been brought up under the apostle's own immediate care, he had drunk deep into his spirit, views, and principles: yet being so young a man for this arduous situation, he thought it necessary to send him this epistle for his instruction and encouragement in governing the church at Ephesus, or

wherever else he might be placed. Though Timothy was the first to reap benefit from this epistle, yet it was not written for his sake alone: but *chiefly* for the direction of all governors and inferior ministers in the church of God to the end of time. All ministers of the gospel are here instructed how to behave themselves in the ministerial work, as to preaching, praying, government, and opposing gainsayers: so that it is the most perfect direction we have in all the Scripture for the discharge of the ministerial office. Therefore all the shepherds of God's flock should study it with the closest attention. And blessed are the people that are governed by officers who walk according to these rules.

II. *The principal points* in this instructive epistle. •

1. *Preaching*.—Ministers are here instructed what they are to teach and what to oppose. They are commanded to abstain carefully from all vain curiosity in doctrines, which are only calculated to lead men astray from the truth as it is in Jesus. They are also to withstand manfully all errors and heresies, which false teachers may introduce into the church, and not to endure blending the law and gospel, which blind guides will attempt in every age. And all ministers are here informed that the only effectual way to counteract and suppress errors of any kind is, by preaching faithfully and fully the unadulterated gospel of the grace of God, as exemplified in the conversion of St. Paul. Chap. i.

2. *Public worship*.—We are here instructed for whom prayers should be made. We must above all pray for kings and governors, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” We must pray for all sorts of men, because Christ died for all sorts, and some of all sorts shall be saved. And as to the manner of praying, we must pray in a holy, charitable, and believing manner, and in all places. Various rules are laid down for the regulation of women’s dress and manners in public assemblies. Chap. ii.

3. *Church government.*—Governors in the church are of Divine appointment: nor can the church prosper or exist in any order without them. But it must be a matter of the utmost consequence what sort of persons are appointed to bear rule: for the doctrine, example, and influence of the governors will go a great way towards forming the character of the church itself, and by the power committed into their hands they can exalt or degrade the church they belong to far more than all other men. It must therefore be of the last importance to every church to be under the government of persons fully qualified to rule. And no greater curse can befall a church than to be under the influence of improper rulers.—Only two degrees of officers are here named, bishops and deacons, which would lead us to conclude that under the term *bishops*, all ministers are included above the deacons. But this by no means implies that the presbyters or elders were without a superintendent, or that a bishop every where must mean a common priest, which is not the case. The character and qualifications both of the priests and deacons that God would have to govern his church are here stated at full length. And they who do not answer to the description of true ministers, can be nothing short of hirelings and mischievous intruders. Chap. iii.

4. *Apostacy foretold.*—Paul by the spirit of prophecy, forewarns Timothy and the church of an awful departure from the faith, that would take place in the latter days, which he describes in a very particular manner, and which exactly answers to the apostacy of the church of Rome. All ministers are warned, as well as Timothy, to stand fast in the faith, to exercise themselves unto godliness, and to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry. Chap. iv.

5. *Discipline.*—The two last chapters are directions given from heaven, not only to Timothy, but to every minister of the gospel, how to deal with all sorts, ranks, and characters of men and women in the church of the living God, showing the great advantage of godliness,

and the danger of erring from the truth.—The whole concludes with a most solemn charge to Timothy and all ministers, to be faithful and diligent in the discharge of their most important office, even until the coming of Christ to judge the world in righteousness.

II. TIMOTHY.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE apostle thanks God for Timothy, prays for him, and longs to see him. He charges him to be faithful, and not be ashamed of the gospel, nor afraid to suffer; but to follow his example, who trusted in Christ in the midst of all dangers. He further exhorts Timothy to make a good soldier after the example of Christ and his servant Paul, in faith and hope: also to make a good shepherd to feed the flock, to warn them of dangers, and to defend them from wolves. Timothy is here instructed how to act, what to flee, and what to follow. The apostle foretells the future trials of the church through false professors and false teachers, and encourages Timothy after his own example, to live by faith according to the Scriptures. A most solemn charge is given to Timothy to make a full proof of his ministry. Paul triumphs in the view of death at hand, when forsaken of all but of his God; and finally he concludes with salutations.

St. Paul is in this epistle the *dying father* counselling his beloved son, and animating him to follow his example.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Instructions, comforts, cautions, and exhortations to ministers.
2. How to act, what to teach, what to flee, and what to follow.
3. The picture of ungodly men. Paul a pattern to all ministers.
4. Exhortations to fulfil the ministry : Paul's own history.

Observations on II. Timothy.

1. The *nature and design* of the epistle.—There are many circumstances which render this epistle highly interesting and very affecting. St. Paul being in bonds, cannot visit Timothy at Ephesus, as he earnestly wished to do, but sends to him this solemn epistle. He writes it in his chains, when forsaken of all men. He writes it at the door of death; it is his swan-like song—his very last epistle. It is written to his beloved Timothy, who had been his fellow-traveller and fellow-labourer from his youth, and who by his extraordinary piety and fidelity had greatly endeared himself to him. The epistle moreover is sent to Timothy, when he was under very trying circumstances, and weighed down with the burden of governing churches that were greatly harassed with false teachers, and errors of various kinds; and when he had hardly any hope of seeing the great Apostle of the Gentiles any more in this world. We do not wonder therefore at the solemnity, the earnestness, and the affection that run through the whole of this epistle, which is written as it were with the apostle's blood, and which he stands ready to seal with his death.—The main *design* of the epistle is, to exhort and encourage Timothy, as well as other ministers of Christ, to stand fast in the faith, and to discharge his ministerial office with fidelity unto the end; to give himself wholly to his arduous employment; to avoid all contention; to resist errors by propagating the pure gospel; to endure persecution with courage and constancy; to prepare for further sufferings; to follow holiness, and to be valiant for his God.

II. What important lessons are here given for all the ministers of the gospel!

1. They are instructed to be *faithful* in the ministerial office, and exhorted in the most earnest manner, by the dying apostle, to copy his example in courage and constancy in propagating the everlasting gospel; not in the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a

sound mind : to stir up the gift that is in them by constant exercise ; to cleave to the truths of God, and not be ashamed of the Lord's testimony : always to keep in mind that the salvation of men depends on the faith of the gospel. Therefore all ministers must hold fast the treasures of gospel truth, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. Chap. i.

2. They are encouraged to endure *hardness and persecution* for their fidelity in the defence of the gospel. As they are enlisted under the banner of Christ, they must be faithful to their Lord and Master, and expect ill treatment from his enemies. Yet they are encouraged to fight his battles, by the expectation of victory, and of the fruits which they shall reap. They are animated to endure persecution, by the example of Paul, by the resurrection of Jesus, and by the prospect of the crown at last. Ministers are to shun all heretics, and propagators of false doctrines ; and to warn and guard the flock of Christ against their pestilential influence. They must also avoid all contentious and angry debates about foolish questions, and strive with all meekness to win back those that are in the ways of death. Chap. ii.

3. The ministers of Christ, in every age, must expect *seducers and enemies of the truth to arise*.—They began to appear in the days of Paul, and he foretells that the church would be much more infested with them in future ages. They are described by their numerous abominations, their hypocrisy, their form of godliness, their cunning craftiness, and their opposition to the truth. God's ministers are here directed how to withstand and counteract the efforts of these seducers. They must follow the example of St. Paul in his ministry and conversation, and in enduring persecution in defence of the gospel. They must cleave to the Scriptures, and diligently and faithfully preach their genuine and powerful doctrines. Paul saith to Timothy, and to every other minister, “ I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach

the word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." Chap. iii, iv.

T I T U S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE apostle greets Titus, and declares that he left him at Crete to regulate the affairs of the church there, and to ordain ministers to preside over the different branches of it. He informs him what qualifications these ministers must possess, as to life, doctrine, and gifts. He also enjoins him to censure and to silence the false teachers who deceive the people with their vain ceremonies. He bids him likewise to charge all ranks, ages, and descriptions of people to fill up their stations honourably ; and to teach them, by his own example, to adorn the gospel, which leads men to holiness and not to licentiousness. He tells him to remind the people of their duty to obey even Heathen Rulers, remembering that they themselves were once heathens and slaves to every sin : but that God had taken pity on them, and saved them by mere grace, in order to bring them into a holy life. Finally, he warns Titus to avoid contests, and to reject heretics.

St. Paul is in this epistle, as well as in those to Timothy, the *bishop of bishops.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The qualifications of true ministers : false teachers described.
2. Titus as bishop of Crete is directed how to govern the church.
3. Obedience to civil rulers, and to Christ who saves by grace.

Observations on Titus.

1. The *history* of *Titus*, of *Crete*, and of the *church* there.

1. *Titus*, which signifies *honoured*, was a Gentile born in Greece. He was converted under St. Paul's ministry, and is called by him, his son, his partner, his fellow-helper, and his brother. He became his companion in travels, was employed as his messenger to several churches, and accompanied him to distant lands. *Titus* was an evangelist, the next degree to an apostle, and supplied the place of an apostle in planting and governing churches. St. Paul was like a general that had a large country to subdue. When a city was taken, he could not stay long there himself, but went forward to conquer and win new territories, leaving those he had taken in care of governors whom he appointed to keep Christ's possession: and for this purpose he left *Titus* at Crete. In about a year after, he was called away for a time; but he is supposed to have returned to Crete, and to have died there in the ninety-fifth year of his age.

2. *Crete*, or *Cures*, now called *Candia*, is one of the Grecian islands in the Mediterranean, and is in the possession of the Turks. It is two hundred miles in length, and fifty in breadth, and above eight hundred in compass. It had in it at one time one hundred cities. It was a rich country, famous for wines, and where brass was first found. It was also infamous for lying, vileness, idolatry, and for the invention of new gods.

3. The *church* at *Crete*.—It is probable that the Cretians had heard early of Christ; as some from that island were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, to witness the singular miracles of that great day, and to hear the convincing sermon of St. Peter. The apostle Paul (at what time is not clear) went to Crete, where he evidently met with very great success in his ministry. The congregations of believers, which he had gathered

there, he was obliged soon to leave in an incomplete state. He left Titus the evangelist behind him in the island; and commissioned him to set all things in order, and to ordain elders in every city.

II. This epistle is written for the instruction of all Christian bishops, as well as of Titus; and the subject matter of it may be divided into two parts. 1. The necessary qualifications for the sacred ministry. Chap. i. ii. How ministers are to discharge their holy office in teaching all descriptions of people. Chap. ii. iii.

1. The *necessary qualifications* for the sacred ministry. Bishops have here plain rules laid before them in regard to whom they are to ordain, and whom to reject, What sort of men, in point of life and doctrine, God appoints for the ministry, is described in a particular manner from ver. 6. to ver. 10. and from thence to the end of the chapter; the false teachers (or men altogether unfit for the ministry) are pointed out by their spirit, doctrine, and conduct, whom the Lord commands the bishop to silence and rebuke. It would be well for the church of God, were these rules and directions duly observed by our ecclesiastical rulers. Carnal pastors will scatter the sheep, banish the gospel, and ruin the church: and they who appoint such men for the sacred ministry cannot be innocent. The Lord fill the church with pastors after his own heart!

2. The *faithful discharge* of the gospel ministry.—Bishops and pastors are here directed how to instruct men and women, the aged and the young, the bond and the free. The duties of all ranks and ages are plainly laid down; and as all pastors are bound to inculcate these duties, those to whom the duties belong are equally bound to perform the same. Obedience to our rulers and to our God, is to be constantly insisted upon; and great care should be taken that all Christian duties are enforced on gospel grounds, according to the rules here laid before us. It can answer no end to insist on the duty, while the principle is neglected. Faith alone can produce the fruits of righteousness. None but those who love God will keep his command-

ments. We must live on grace, if we would live unto holiness. While ministers are insisting upon duties, they should show, according to the Scriptures, that the grace which bringeth salvation will alone teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly; and that nothing but a sense of the kindness, love, and mercy of God our Saviour, in justifying us by grace, can effectually incline our hearts to the obedience of Christ and of our governors. See chap. iii. iv.

PHILEMON.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE apostle salutes Philemon, and expresses his joy at hearing of his faith, and love, and bounty. He very affectionately and pathetically intreats him, to receive into favour his servant Onesimus, who had run away, but was now converted under St. Paul's ministry while he was in bonds.

St. Paul is in this epistle the *reconciler or peacemaker.*

Observations on Philemon.

1. *Philemon* is nowhere mentioned, save in this epistle; nor is it clear who he was, or where he lived. It appears that he was a Christian of some eminence, and a man of wealth, having a company of Christians at his house; and he is commended for his faith in Christ, and his bountiful love to all the saints. He was very dear to the apostle, who calls him his dearly beloved, his brother, his partner, and fellow-labourer. Some think that he was one of the ministers of Colossé.

2. *Onesimus* was a slave of Philemon. It is generally thought that he robbed his master of some money, and then left him and fled to Rome, a distance of some hundreds of miles. It was so ordered of God that he heard St. Paul preaching in prison, and was converted by him. His excellent conduct and true piety afterwards endeared him greatly to the apostle, who thought proper to send him back to his master ; and probably Onesimus wished to return to make restitution, and to obtain pardon.

3. This *epistle* is sent by Onesimus to gain him admittance, and to procure him forgiveness and favour with his injured master. The cause of Onesimus is here pleaded in the most prudent, affectionate, and pathetic manner. The epistle is masterly in argument, and replete with useful instructions.

HEBREWS.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE design of this epistle is to set forth the glory of Christ, the true Messiah. The eternal Father declares that Jesus is the true God, infinitely superior to the angels that worship him. All men are commanded to obey him, who assumed the human nature to suffer and die in their stead. Jesus is far superior to Moses; and we must believe in him, or lose the heavenly Canaan. He is far superior to Aaron, having an eternal priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, and the Aaronic priesthood is lost in that of Christ. To apostatize from Jesus is most dangerous ; but his believing people are safe, and increasingly happy. The gospel covenant is far superior to that of Sinai, which is done away ; and the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice infinitely exceeds that of the legal sacrifices. The one sacrifice of Christ is complete and eternal. Woe to them that forsake

him ; and blessed are they who live by faith upon him. The two last chapters are exhortations, instructions, and encouragements for the suffering followers of Christ.

St. Paul is in this epistle the *evangelical interpreter of the law of Moses.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The godhead of the Mediator, whom angels adore.
2. The glorious ends for which Christ assumed the human nature.
3. Christ far above Moses : warnings against unbelief.
4. Of the heavenly rest : the word of God, and throne of grace.
5. The priesthood of Christ far superior to that of Aaron.
6. The danger of apostacy : believers must grow in grace.
7. Christ a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
8. The Sinai covenant to give way to the gospel covenant.
9. All the types of the law have their fulfilment in Christ.
10. Christ's sacrifice alone takes away sin : exhortations.
11. The power of faith exemplified in eminent saints.
12. Exhortations to holiness and godliness in Christ.
13. Admonitions as to a variety of Christian duties.

Observations on Hebrews.

1. *The history.*—This admirable and grand epistle was unquestionably written by the apostle Paul, whom the Jews hated above all men, though he loved them even unto death. He prudently conceals his name lest their prejudices should be excited against his writings. As the Greek language was universally understood over the Roman Empire both by Jews and Gentiles, it is, upon the whole, more probable that the epistle was written in Greek than in Hebrew ; nor is it proved that a Hebrew copy was ever seen. Though the epistle might in the first instance be sent to the converted Jews at Jerusalem ; yet doubtless it was designed to be for instruction to all Jews scattered over the whole world, and finally for the use of all Gentiles also. It is addressed to the Hebrews, or the twelve tribes of Israel without distinction.

2. The *occasion* of this epistle.—The unbelieving Jews continued under the most inveterate hatred of Christ, denying his godhead and the reality of his mediation; maintaining that he was a mere man, and one that deceived the people; and therefore they justified their own act in putting him to death. They were also very tenacious of their ancient customs as Jews, and thought that renouncing Judaism and turning Christians, would be attended with the most serious loss of privileges. Even those of the Jews that were in part converted to Christianity could not be prevailed upon to give up entirely the ceremonial law, and the Levitical priesthood; but they adhered still to the shadows after Messiah came. The apostle here obviates all these objections, and corrects these mistakes, by showing who Christ is, and by describing the nature of his mediation, and the efficacy of his death.

3. The *main design* of this epistle is, to wean the Jews from the Mosaical dispensation, and to confirm them in Christianity. With this view, the apostle fully proves, that the state of the church under the law and the Levitical priesthood was to last only for a time; and that it never was God's intention that sacrifices should continue always, because of their weakness and insufficiency to take away sin, and to save the lost. He shows that their priesthood, sacrifices, and ceremonies could never purge the conscience and restore sinners to God, and therefore that they could be only types and shadows of the real and true Saviour. He demonstrates also, that Jesus is that true Saviour, the long-promised Messiah, in whom all the types, shadows, and ceremonies of the Old Testament dispensation had their fulfilment; and hence he argues, that the time for the shadows was at an end, as they could answer no further purpose, when the Saviour himself, whom they typified, had appeared.

II. St. Paul in a most masterly manner proves to the Hebrews, that instead of losing, they would *gain* every way, infinitely, by giving up the shadows for the substance, by exchanging Moses for Christ, and

Judaism for Christianity. And this he proves by dwelling on these two main arguments: 1. That Christ is infinitely superior to all beings, both in person and office: 2. That the church has far higher privileges under the new testament than it had under the law.—

1. The *superiority of Christ* in person and office.—He is far above all *angels*. He made them, and they worship him. Even his manhood by virtue of its union with the Godhead is exalted above all created beings, “and has a name above every name.” Jesus is superior to *Moses*, as a Prophet, Lawgiver, and Mediator. Moses was but a servant for a time in the church of God; but Christ built the church and dwelleth in it for ever, and he is Mediator of a better covenant than that of Sinai. Jesus, as a king, is far superior to *Melchisidec*, king of Salem; and to *Joshua*, who conducted Israel to Canaan. Jesus, as our High Priest, is infinitely superior to *Aaron*. Aaron had occasion to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the people: Christ had not, having no sins of his own: he offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and he ever liveth to make intercession for us. The apostle spends several chapters, full of irresistible arguments, in proving the infinite superiority of Christ’s person and priesthood, in order to prevail on the Hebrews to relinquish the Levitical priesthood, (which was now done away) and to come over wholly to Christ, and to abide steadfastly in him, who is Priest for ever after the power of an endless life. The apostle also demonstrates that all the sacrifices and ceremonies under the law, which the Jews were so reluctant to relinquish, were only types and shadows of better things to come, and that as all these had their accomplishment in Christ, the shadows must flee away.

2. The vast superiority of the *gospel church state*.—It is proved throughout the epistle by the most conclusive arguments, that the church of God has far higher privileges under the priesthood of Christ than it had under the Levitical priesthood. Three particulars are much insisted upon—the new *covenant*, the new *taber-*

nacle, and the new sacrifice.—The covenant of Sinai, under which Aaron ministered, was faulty and defective, and to be done away. Christ's covenant is established on better promises, far more spiritual, and is intended to last always.—The *tabernacle* of the priests under the law, was a worldly sanctuary, a figure for the time present, into which they entered with the blood of beasts, which could not make him that did the service perfect. But Christ exercised his priesthood in a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by man, but by God himself, that is, Christ's body. He entered into heaven itself with his own blood, and obtained not temporal, but eternal redemption for his people.—The *sacrifices* under the Aaronic priesthood could never take away sin, though offered year by year. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” But Christ, after he had offered one sacrifice, which needs never to be repeated, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. And by this one offering of himself, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Thus we see that our great High Priest is far superior to Aaron, and that the gospel ministry under the *new* testament, far excels the Levitical under the *old*. The difference between the two dispensations is strikingly and remarkably described. Chap. xii. 18—24. Here is enough, one would think, to win upon a Jew to become a Christian, and to determine Christians to cleave to Jesus for ever.

The reader should *well understand* the main design of this epistle. The apostle does not try to persuade the Hebrews to change their religion. On the contrary, he takes pains to prove to them that the religion of the people of God was the same for substance under the *old* as under the *new* testament; for there never was but one true religion, and this will always remain unchangeably the same. All that the apostle aims at is, to prevail on the Hebrews to come over entirely from the old to the new dispensation of the same gospel; to give up Moses for Christ, and the image for the thing itself. With a view to gain them, he shows that the

religion of the people of God has always been what it now is, a scheme of faith in Christ, and dependence upon him ; and that the just in every age have lived by faith, as the history of the ancient worthies recorded in chap. xi. abundantly testifies, where the nature, power and efficacy of faith are beautifully delineated. There we see what faith is, and what faith can do : it surmounts all difficulties, and overcomes death. The apostle not only proves the sameness of God's religion in every age, but labours to convince the Hebrews that the new dispensation is far superior to the old, in order that they may never think of returning from the substance to the shadows. We see then that the grand point which the apostle had in view was to bring the Hebrews to live by faith on the Son of God, which they were instructed to do under the former dispensation. He faithfully warns them of the danger of unbelief, which alone can keep any from entering into the promised land of eternal rest. May we live, may we die, in faith.

Here end the fourteen epistles of St. Paul.

J A M E S.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE apostle James saith to all Christians—Be patient in tribulation; ask wisdom of God; know that all sins flow from the heart; and that the word you hear must be put in practice. Do not so regard the rich as to despise the poor. Prove your faith by its fruits. Shun censoriousness, and all other abuses of the tongue. Get wisdom from above to control your tempers, and to direct your conduct. Subdue the lusts of your hearts, the fountain of all evil: resist Satan, cleave to God, repent, love the brethren, and depend on Providence for maintenance. Ye rich oppressors, woe unto

you : and ye suffering poor, be patient, after the example of the prophets : never swear ; but always pray for yourselves and others.

St. James is in this epistle the *practical preacher*.

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Of outward and inward temptations, and practising the word.
2. Of undue partiality for the rich, and of faith without works.
3. Of the power of the tongue : earthly and heavenly wisdom.
4. Of the lust of the heart : and of dependance on Providence.
5. Of rich oppressors : and the duty of the oppressed.

Observations on James.

I. The *history*.—1. Little can be said with certainty respecting James, only that he was appointed by the apostles bishop of Jerusalem, where he suffered martyrdom for his great zeal and fidelity in the cause of his Lord and Master. A little before his death, he wrote this epistle for the use of all Christians to the end of time: but, being the bishop of Jerusalem, he addressed it to all Jews professing Christianity, dispersed among all nations.

2. The *state of the converted Jews* at this time.—Though they were no way eminent for pure and powerful religion ; yet the mere profession of the religion of Jesus was quite sufficient to draw on them hatred and persecution from the great body of the Jews, which continued to reject Christ and his gospel. But the Jews who did profess Christianity appear from the tenor of the epistle to have been in a very bad state ; having far more of the profession of faith than of practical religion and true holiness ; being mere hearers of the word, but not doers of it. Wearing the mask of gospel profession, they lived after the flesh, and practised iniquity. It appears that they were given to covetousness, pride, licentiousness and hypocrisy ; and that their tongues and tempers were without control. In order to correct these great and multiplied evils,

and also to comfort sufferers under the cross, St. James sends them this excellent epistle.

II. We have in this epistle the following instructive lessons.

1. That all we *suffer* for Christ's sake is matter of rejoicing, and that we should endure the cross with all patience and meekness. We are also directed to go in faith to God for wisdom to teach us our duty as Christians, in every station; and are given to understand that all evils proceed from man, and all goodness from God; and that in order to be happy, we must live out of ourselves upon the Lord our God. Chap. i.

2. *Of living and dead faith.*—Many, through ignorance of the Scripture, have thought that St. Paul and St. James differ respecting the way in which a sinner is justified before God. But this epistle leads to no such conclusion. No one will deny that St. Paul, throughout his epistles, invariably and firmly maintains that man is justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. He had constantly to contend with self-righteous Pharisees, and saw that man naturally trusts to himself, and to the merit of his own works; therefore he laboured to prove, that salvation is ALL OF GRACE, that eternal life is the gift of God, and that our good works have no share in our justification. This was St. Paul's doctrine. Great numbers indeed in every age have *mistaken it*, and conceived that he did not at all insist on the necessity of good works, because he would allow them no place in our justification before God. It seems that the converted Jews whom St. James is addressing had quite perverted the doctrines of St. Paul, and turned libertines. They conceived that while they professed the doctrines of the grace of God, they might safely neglect moral duties, and even practise iniquity, and still be very good Christians, so long as they held fast the doctrine of faith. Too many in our day are under the same fatal delusion.—St. James sees it necessary, and is directed by the spirit of God, to *correct* these injurious mistakes in professors, by explaining to them the *nature* of that faith which Paul preached. He

proves by various arguments and happy illustrations, that the faith of the gospel is not a mere notion in the head, or holding in sentiment certain tenets ; but a living and powerful principle in the heart, which will naturally and necessarily produce good works in obedience to God's commandments. The point with James is not whether man is justified by faith or by works, but whether he is saved by a living or by a dead faith. St. Paul proves against the self righteous, that man is saved by *faith*; and James proves against the licentious, that the faith which saves will ever obey God, and produce the fruits of righteousness. St. James allows, (chap. ii. 23.) that Abraham was justified before God by faith alone, and that for years before he offered up his son. But by his obedience in this act, Abraham proved to the world that he was a real believer in heart, and a justified person ; and in this sense he was justified by his works before men. By his works his faith was made perfect, as a tree is made perfect when loaded with fruits. The point with James is simply to show, that the faith which saves the sinner will ever obey God in all things ; and that the faith which obeys not God is a dead faith, and cannot save the soul. Where he speaks of *justification by works*, it is of the justification of our faith and character in the sight of men that he speaks. He even proves conclusively that man cannot be justified before God by his works, where he saith, “ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” No man has kept the law without one offence : therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified before God. Chap. ii.

3. *Practical errors reproved.*—St. James does not, like his brother Paul, lay down the doctrines of grace to form our principle : but his commission is to reprove licentious professors for their abuse of those doctrines. This epistle is not so much to teach us what we are to believe, as to direct us how we are to live, and to correct what is wrong in our tempers, language, and conduct. The chief practical errors which he here

censures in professors are the following.—He warns us not to show undue partiality to the rich, to the injury of the poor. He gives the strictest charge against all abuses of the tongue, and prescribes the remedy. He enjoins all Christians to mortify worldly lusts which war against the soul, and directs them how it may be done. He counsels believers to act spiritually in worldly concerns, and to do all in the name of the Lord, and not in their own spirit. He threatens rich worldlings with the severest judgments; and warns all men to avoid swearing. He counsels all, especially the afflicted, to live in prayer: and gives direction to restore an erring brother.

I. P E T E R.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

ST. PETER addresses the believers scattered among all nations, and sets before them the inestimable *privileges* and happiness of the elect after they are born of God, though in a suffering condition. They are born heirs of heaven, and kept unto it; and made partakers of salvation in Christ through the gospel. Chap. i. to ver. 13. In the next place we have *general directions* common to all Christians, how to live as becometh the gospel. We are told that the men of grace must hope to the end for salvation; lead a holy life in order to it; live in brotherly love; profit by the word; live more and more on Christ, and adorn their profession before unbelievers. Chap. ii. to ver. 13. From hence to the end are given *exhortations* to discharge the duties of our several relations and conditions in life.

St. Peter is in this epistle the *nursing father* and the *guardian of morals.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. The privileges and duties of souls born of God by the gospel.
2. New-born souls to grow up in Christ and true holiness.
3. Duty of husbands and wives, of Christ's members, of sufferers.
4. That we must live to God in love, and suffer patiently.
5. The mutual duties of pastors and people in all ages.

Observations on I. Peter.

1. *The history.*--1. Simon son of Jonah, who was afterwards by Christ surnamed Peter, was of the tribe of Naphtali, and by trade a fisherman, who resided in a small village called Bethsaida, on the banks of the sea of Galilee, called the sea of Tiberias, or the lake of Genesareth. He and his brother Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist, and became the disciples of Jesus.

Very great honours were conferred by the Saviour on Peter. He was one of the first that he called to be his disciples. Though Peter's faith wavered for a time, yet when he saw the miraculous draught of fishes, it was confirmed : he then left all, and became the faithful follower of his Lord and Master. When Christ chose twelve of his disciples to be his constant attendants, and witnesses of his doctrine and miracles, that they might afterwards testify of these things to the world, and become his apostles and messengers to carry his gospel to Jews and Gentiles in all lands, and confirm the same with miracles, Peter was one of them. Out of the twelve Christ chose three to be admitted into his private counsels. Peter was one of these, and is generally mentioned first. None but these three were with Christ to witness his glorious transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and his unexampled agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Peter was sent to the sea for the tribute money, and was called to walk on the boisterous waves to go to his Master ; and to him the Lord said, I will give unto thee the keys of heaven. Peter was peculiarly honoured of the Lord after his resurrection. He was the first to whom Christ appeared alone. At the

sea of Tiberias, he singled out Peter for a most interesting private conference, and gave him a solemn charge to feed his sheep, and to feed his lambs. And on the ever memorable day of Pentecost, Peter was the preacher when three thousand souls were brought at once from death to life. When he is imprisoned for the testimony of Jesus, an angel is sent down from heaven to set him at liberty. He was the first preacher among the Gentiles, and was in a peculiar manner the Apostle of Christ to the Jews, amongst whom he wrought many and marvellous miracles ; he gave feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, he cured the palsy in Eneas, raised Tabitha to life, struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and gave the Holy Ghost to the believers at Samaria. He was endued with the gift of tongues and of prophecy, and foretold the coming of Antichrist. In these and many other instances was Peter honoured of his divine Master, who told him that he should at last glorify him by dying a martyr in his cause.

St. Peter had great *excellencies*, and was remarkable for zeal and courage.—He was on various occasions as the mouth of the choir of the apostles. When they were brought before the Sanhedrim, and asked by what authority they preached and wrought miracles, Peter boldly answered, that they acted in the name of that Jesus whom they had crucified. He was probably the first that left all things to follow Christ ; and he said sincerely unto him, “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death.” He ventured on the water at Christ’s command : and when his Master was apprehended, he drew the sword, and followed his Lord to his trial : and at length he suffered crucifixion in the service of his God and Saviour.

St. Peter also had his *infirmities*.—He was rash and self-confident. He even rebuked his Master when he talked of his death. He used the sword contrary to his Master’s will. He presumed on his courage and fidelity to cleave to Christ when all forsook him. Yet

he did forsake him, and swore that he never knew him. The brightest jewels have their flaws ; and every man, even the best of saints, breaks down somewhere. He failed where he least feared. But his Lord, who delighteth in mercy, restored him, and taught him humility by his frailty. His travels, labours and success were truly great, and he had the honour of dying as a martyr, probably at Rome, in old age.

2. To *whom* the epistle is written.—No doubt can be entertained but that it was designed by the Holy Ghost to be for the use and benefit of the Gentile churches founded by St. Paul, and for the universal church of Christ to the end of time. Yet it is addressed in a peculiar manner to the believing Hebrews dispersed among the nations, called here “strangers scattered,” which can apply only to the Jews. The Gentile converts are called proselytes. It is upon the whole probable that Peter wrote to the Hebrew converts dispersed in all countries, to edify and comfort them in their afflictions, and to correct their errors. James after him wrote to the same people and on the same occasion, and Paul wrote his epistle to the Hebrews after them both. Peter’s epistle was sent from Babylon by the hand of Silvanus.

II. The drift of the epistle is, to set before all Christians their high privileges; and to exhort them to divers Christian duties, to discharge relative duties, and to endure afflictions after the example of Christ.

1. *Christian privileges.*—These are great—no less than all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, many of which are here mentioned; such as being born of God to an eternal inheritance, and made holy and happy in Christ, who sprinkles us with his blood, and renews us with his Spirit. This leads to the obedience of Christ, and the hope of glory. All these flow from God’s electing love in his beloved Son, through the medium of the everlasting gospel. Chap. i. to verse 12.

2. *The personal duties of all Christians.*—They are exhorted to make due improvement of their high spiritual privileges, and to exercise the grace bestowed

upon them. God saith to them by his servant, live in constant hope of salvation; and in order to it, live godly in Christ Jesus, depart from all iniquity, and so confute the slanders of your enemies. Live in love to one another; feed your souls on the word of God, that ye may grow in every grace, and lay aside all evil tempers of mind. Live more and more upon Christ by faith, that ye may grow up a spiritual house, and a holy nation, and let your light shine before unbelievers. This part of the epistle should be studied with great care by every Christian, from chap. i. ver. 12. to chap. ii. ver. 12; also chap. iv. to ver. 12.

3. *Relative duties.*—We are here instructed how to carry ourselves in all relations and conditions of life, and commanded from heaven to do our duty. We have in the plainest manner set before us, the duties of magistrates and subjects; of servants and masters; of husbands and wives; of ministers and people; of sufferers towards their oppressors; and of Christians towards one another. Every one of us all should pay peculiar attention to that part of the instruction which belongs to our own station, and endeavour faithfully to obey God in performing the same. Chap. ii. ver. 13. to the end of the epistle.

4. *Sufferings.*—It is the appointed lot of those that are born of God to an inheritance in the heavens, to suffer on the earth. Jesus saith to his disciples, the world will hate you, and in the world ye shall have tribulation, ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Peter saw that this was the case in his day. He therefore, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, wrote much on the subject of suffering in the cause of Christ. In every chapter of this epistle the subject is introduced, with a view to animate and encourage young converts in particular, to stand fast in the faith, and not to despond because of their trials. He shows, that they who suffer for righteousness' sake should endure with meekness, patience, and joy, blessing their enemies and doing them good. In order to prevail on suffering Christians to endure the cross in this manner,

he reminds them that their cause is good. It is for well doing ; for righteousness' sake ; for the name of Christ ; for following the Lord. And for their encouragement, he sets before them the sufferings of Christ, and the fruits they produced : the benefits of their own sufferings in this life, and the glory to which they shall be conducted at the last. So the main design of this epistle is, to bring the children of grace to consider their privileges, to perform their duties, and to endure their sufferings.

II. P E T E R.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

PETER reminds the scattered Hebrew converts of the great things God had done for them, and promised unto them ; and he invites them to abound in every grace and virtue. He is the more urgent because his death is at hand, and the more confident because he had seen the glory of Christ ; yet he saith, that the written word is the best ground of faith. He forewarns them that false teachers shall arise to deceive, whose principles, conduct, and character he describes to the life ; and shows, by various awful examples, that their latter end will be tremendous destruction ; but that God will deliver his people from them. He foretells also that profane scoffers shall arise, who shall deny the coming of Christ to judgment. He shows that Jesus delays in mercy, but will assuredly come, and that we should prepare for his coming.

St. Peter is in this epistle the *warning prophet.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Converts urged by Peter to abound in every grace.
2. Of false teachers, and the danger of being deceived by them.
3. Of scoffers who deny the coming of Christ to judgment.

Observations on II. Peter.

I. The occasion and design of this epistle.—The apostle Peter writes both his epistles to the same people, the believing Jews scattered throughout the Roman empire. They were young in knowledge, babes in grace, and surrounded with peculiar trials and temptations. It is probable that Peter had an eye in particular to those that were converted under his preaching on the day of Pentecost, as well as to others afterwards converted. He writes to remind them of the truths which he had delivered unto them, that they might remember these doctrines when the apostles were taken from them, and understand that the doctrines of the apostles and prophets were the same concerning Christ the Saviour. As his first epistle was written chiefly to exhort them to *patience* under the tyranny of persecutors, lest they should yield to them or sink under their fiery trials; so this second epistle is to exhort them to stand fast in the *truths* of the gospel against the deceptions of heretics; and also to make progress in holiness, notwithstanding all that profane scoffers should say against their religion. The epistle is written with great energy of style, and with strong affections by the aged apostle, who then stood at the door of death. It is replete with the most important instructions on a variety of occasions, which belong to us as well as the dispersed Hebrews.

II. The epistle consists of *three* parts, according to the number of its chapters.—The apostle encourages the Hebrew converts, from their past experience of God's great goodness unto them, to go forward in grace.—He forewarns them that blasphemous *heretics* would creep in among them, and were even then beginning to appear.—He foretells that *scoffers* would arise who shall deny the second coming of Christ, and warns believers to withstand such delusions.

1. *Progress in grace.*—The apostle reminds these believers of what God had bestowed upon them already,

with a view to animate them to go forward. He saith, The Lord hath given you precious faith, and all things pertaining to life and godliness, with exceeding great and precious promises. Therefore go to this God for more grace, that you may abound in every Christian virtue and in all true holiness, till you make your calling and election sure, and find an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He assigns several reasons for his earnestness: viz. That the gospel is not a fable, but agrees with the prophets: that he had himself seen the glory of Christ; and that he must soon lay down his tabernacle. Chap. i.

2. *Blasphemous heretics*.—The apostle warns the believers that heretical teachers would soon arise, and bring in privily damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. That these would delude many, and bring on themselves swift destruction, which he illustrates by three awful examples. He describes these seducers by six black traits in their character, that they may be known and shunned. It is the lot of the church of God in all ages to be disturbed by false teachers in some form or another. The enemy often changes his ground, but never rests. He suits his errors and temptations to the state of the church and circumstances of the times. The church on earth must continue in a militant state, and the tares will grow with the wheat until the harvest, when Jesus will thoroughly purge his floor.

3. *Profane scoffers*.—St. Peter foretells that vain and profligate men shall arise in the days of the gospel, who shall deny the coming of Christ to judgment, and turn the subject into ridicule. The apostle refutes the infidel error of these licentious scoffers by cogent arguments, and shows, that the reason of Christ's delay is in mercy to sinners; but that in his own appointed time, he will most assuredly come to judgment. He exhorts believers to prepare for his coming, that they may be ready to go into that world wherein dwelleth truth without error, holiness without defile-

ment, and glory without alloy for ever. And with this view, he brings all things which they had heard from prophets and apostles to their remembrance, exhorts them to grow in grace, warns them against heretics, and predicts that scoffers shall arise in the church.—Let Christians watch and pray.

I. JOHN.

The Order and leading Subjects of this Epistle.

THE apostle declares to the churches what he knew of Christ, the word of life, wishing them to have fellowship with him. In order to which they must be holy and walk in the light. He says to believers, sin not, trust in Christ, prove your union with him by your conformity to his word and example, and by your love to the brethren. Die to the world, beware of heretics, cleave to Christ. He sets before the churches the love of God and its fruits; and exhorts to brotherly love after the example of Christ. He cautions Christians against impostors, whom he describes, and further exhorts to brotherly love. He then shows that all graces go together, that the doctrines of Christ are true, and that faith and eternal life are united. He speaks of prayer, of sin unto death, and of the difference between believers and the world.

St. John is in this epistle the *affectionate and watchful guardian of the universal church.*

Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.

1. Of communion with Christ : of holiness and pardon.
2. Union with Christ : love of the world : Antichrist : truth.
3. The love of God : Christian marks : brotherly love.
4. The spirit of truth and error : brotherly love urged.
5. Of several graces, doctrine of Christ, prayer, sin unto death.

Observations on I. John.

I. The history.—This epistle was unquestionably written by St. John, who wrote the gospel and the book of Revelation. His delightful theme is always “God in the flesh,” of whom he speaks in the sublimest strain of admiration, and with a flow of holy love, peculiar to himself.

1. *St. John* at the time he wrote this epistle was full of years. When he looked around him, he saw that of the twelve apostles, he alone was left, all the rest were taken from the church below to that above. On such an occasion he would be ready to say with Elijah, “Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and I alone am left,” &c. In surveying the universal church, he saw to his sorrow that it was exceedingly corrupted, and marred with false doctrines and ungodly practices. Heresies of various kinds abounded already, and he foresaw that they would yet abound more in the ages to come. Some in his day denied the Godhead of the Saviour, and some his proper manhood, and called in question the reality of his sufferings, death and atonement. Some rejected salvation by grace, and went to the law for life; whilst others, who professed the doctrines of grace, denied their obligations to obey the moral law. Between them all, Christ and the church, the law and the gospel, were set aside. These heretics branched out into endless subdivisions, and the apostle might well say, that there were many Antichrists. The venerable apostle beheld, with deep concern, that the church of God was on the decline. Divine love was abated, the bond of union enfeebled, many evils produced, and Christians walked in darkness.

2. When the aged apostle had taken this universal survey of the state of things in the church, he sends out this admirable and most affectionate epistle, not to any particular church of Jews or Gentiles, but as a circular letter, or general charge, from the only surviving apostle, to the churches of the saints in all lands. And in this general epistle he adapts his instructions to the

exigences of the times, and the state of things in the church at that period, in order to counteract the heresies and the evils which existed, and to promote the interests of Christ's religion in the world, from which he was soon to depart.

II. This epistle abounds with sublime *doctrines*, which are not arranged in any methodical order, and the same subjects are repeatedly resumed under new motives. This apostle communicates the doctrines of Christ, chiefly in the way of affectionate exhortations, and close arguing. The points he chiefly dwells upon are these. He exhorts all Christians to walk in the light, to beware of heresies, to consider the love of God, to abound in brotherly love, to believe the testimony of God; and lays down a vast number of marks to distinguish real Christians from others.

1. The apostle counsels all believers to *walk in the light*.—That is, to resemble Christ in knowledge, holiness, righteousness, truth, love, and felicity, and not to walk in the darkness of sin, ignorance and error. He shows, that walking in the light leads to communion with God the Father through Christ by the Holy Ghost, and to communion among themselves. He shows also, that the knowledge of the glory of Christ, whom he had seen and heard, was necessary to lead them to the light, and to happiness in God. Chap. i.

2. He warns the whole church against *Antichrist* and *Heretical teachers*.—All are Antichrists who deny the Father and the Son; and he that denieth the Son, hath not the Father. Many such heresies had sprung up in the church at that early period; but separated from it, because they were not of it. They were of the world, and the world heard them. St. John, by the spirit of prophecy, forewarns the church that these heretical teachers would increase in the ages to come; and cautions all to beware of them. Chap. ii.

3. The apostle calls on all the churches to consider the *love of God to man*.—He does not attempt to describe it, but stands astonished at the immensity of it. He estimates the greatness of God's love by the fruits

and effects of it : particularly these two : God so loved the world that he sent his Eternal Son to be the Saviour of the world ; to be the propitiation for our sins ; to die for us, that we might live through him. And also, God so loved us that he hath made us his sons, and will finally make us like Christ. What manner of love is this ! If we are made the sons of God, we must and shall depart from all iniquity, as the apostle fully demonstrates. Chap. iii, iv.

4. *Brotherly love* is the point which the Apostle presses most earnestly throughout the whole epistle. He describes the nature and proves the necessity of love among Christians : shows that they are bound by every tie to love one another : lays down the marks by which this temper of heart may be discovered : points out the immense benefits which it produceth : urges it by various arguments, especially by the love of God to man, which is the main drift of the fourth chapter, and proves, that where brotherly love is wanting, the love of God is not there. The subject is important, let it be well studied, and faithfully practised by all the children of God.

5. Lastly. The apostle shows that we must *believe the record* which God hath given us of his Son, all that is revealed in Scripture respecting the Saviour. We have the strongest foundation for faith, even the testimony of the Three Divine Persons in the One Jehovah who cannot lie. They all bear witness that Jesus is the Son of God, and the only Saviour. The efficacy of faith is great ; by faith we overcome the world, and obtain eternal life in the Son of God, and know that we have eternal life, and have the witness in ourselves, and obtain what we ask of God in prayer. Unbelief gives God the lie, and ruins the soul. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Chap. v.

6. This epistle abounds more than any other part of scripture with *marks and evidences* of the state of grace. They are so numerous, and so entwined with every subject in the epistle, that they cannot be here enume-

rated. There is scarcely a sentence throughout the whole, but the reader may easily turn into a *test* or criterion to try by it the state of his own soul. And the test is infallible—it is the testimony of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Ghost. Believe, love, obey, and then know that you dwell in God and God in you, and that you have eternal life in his Son.

II. JOHN.

THIS short epistle was written by John to some lady of high rank, eminent in grace, and greatly esteemed by the church of God. The drift of the epistle is to commend this lady and her children for their steadfastness in the faith; to exhort them to persevere in the truth and love of God, and to beware of those heretics who denied the incarnation of Christ. He shows the danger of listening to those seducers, who depart from the doctrines of Christ, and who are without God in the world. We see that God has a peculiar regard for pious families, by the honour he confers on this lady and her children.

III. JOHN.

THIS most friendly epistle was sent by the apostle John to Gaius. There are three persons of this name mentioned in scripture. This, probably, was Gaius of Corinth, whom Paul calls, “Gaius mine host.” He was a man of wealth, eminent in the church, and distinguished for his hospitality. St. John sends him this epistle to express his affectionate regard for so admirable a character, and to request that he would (according to his usual benevolence) help forward some

missions that were going among the Gentiles. The apostle complains aloud of the malicious and proud Diotrephes, and commends as highly the excellent Demetrius. We learn here, that very opposite characters will ever be found in the church of God; some eminent for their virtues, and others remarkable for their vices; but Christ will at last thoroughly purge his floor, and separate for ever the chaff from the wheat.

J U D E.

JUDE, or Judas, was one of the twelve apostles, and brother of James the less, bishop of Jerusalem. He is supposed to have preached the gospel in Judea, Arabia, and Syria, and last of all in Persia, where the Magi slew him for preaching against their superstitions. Jude wrote this epistle later than any by Paul and Peter. The church was at that time greatly harassed with the dangerous heresies and abominable impieties of the Simonians, Nicolaitans, and Gnosticks, who denied the Saviour, and maintained that sin was an indifferent thing. As this epistle and the second by St. Peter were written against the same heresies, the language is strikingly similar. This epistle is addressed to the faithful in general, to exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith of their common salvation. The apostle warns them of these pestilential seducers, which had crept secretly into the church, and shows, by several dreadful examples, that the heavy wrath of God had fallen on similar offenders of old, and that they would not escape, as Enoch and the apostles of the Lord testify. Their character is faithfully and fully delineated. The apostle concludes with an earnest prayer for the preservation of the faithful, and with ascribing all glory and praise to God our Saviour.

R E V E L A T I O N .

The Order and leading Subjects of this Book.

JOHN, when in the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, had an extraordinary vision of the Lord Jesus in glory, and is commissioned to deliver seven epistles from Christ himself to the seven principal churches in Asia; which, according to their different states, may be thus denominated:—Languishing Ephesus; Sweet-smelling Smyrna; High and haughty Pergamos; Growing Thyatira; Hypocritical Sardis; Godly Philadelphia; Lukewarm and vain-glorious Laodicea. Some have conceived, that the different states of these churches were typical of seven different periods of the christian church.—The main body of the book contains a series of prophecies, relating to events which would take place in the church and nations of the earth, through all generations, to the day of judgment, and the eternal state. Mr. Faber's plan of interpretation is here preferred, and principally followed.

Observations on the Revelation.

1. Terms here used explained.—*Heaven* (when taken in a temporal sense), signifies the whole body politic; *Air*, the same; *Sun*, the Sovereign power; *Moon*, the People; *Stars*, Princes; *Thunder, lightnings, hail, clouds*, convulsions and tumults; *Heaven* (taken spiritually), the whole Church militant; *New Heaven*, the Church triumphant; *Sun*, our Lord; *Moon*, the Church; *Stars*, Pastors; *Dews and rain*, the Graces of the Holy Ghost; *Earth* (in a temporal sense), the

Roman Empire; *Sea*, a restless nation; *Flood*, a large body of men in motion; *Rivers and fountains*, Nations in a tranquil state; *Many Waters*, Nations and people; *Earthquake*, sudden convulsions; *Mountains, and Islands*, Kingdoms and States; *Turning the sea into Blood*, bloody Revolutions; *Drying up a river*, declension of that Nation; *Earth* (taken in a spiritual sense), state of Paganism; *Shooting of a Star*, the apostasy of a Christian Pastor; *Pure river of water*, the eternal peace of the church; *Sea of Glass*, the same; the *Great City, Sodom, Egypt*, the Roman Empire; the *Holy City, or Jerusalem*, the Church of Christ; *Harlot*, Apostate Church; *Babylon*, the adulterous Church of Rome; *Merchants*, great men in the Roman Empire; *Temple*, true Worshippers; *Outer Court*, mere Professors; *Beast*, or *Wild Beast*, never means a single kingdom, but an universal Empire, hostile to the Church of Christ; *Heads of the Beast*, different forms of government; *Horns*, different kingdoms; *Tail*, anti-christian superstition; *Dominion of the Beast*, his persecuting power; *Life of the Beast*, the principle of idolatry, or apostasy, which make him a Beast; *Death of the Beast*, the destruction of that principle; *Ten parts of Streets, or ten Horns*, ten Kingdoms within the Roman Empire; *Beast* (in a temporal sense) means an Idolatrous Empire; (in a spiritual sense) a Superstitious Power affecting universal dominion; and a *Horn* (in this sense) is a spiritual kingdom, springing out of a secular or a spiritual Empire; one spiritual Horn grew into a Beast, and had horns of its own, viz. *Popery*, who is the False Prophet; the *Dragon*, or *Serpent*, is the Devil, acting through these earthly and apostate powers.

II. The prophecies of this book commence in the sixth chapter; the preceding chapters are all preparatory: Thus—

Chap. 1. John's extraordinary *Vision of Christ in glory*.

2, 3. The seven *Epistles* to the seven churches.

4. The door of heaven is opened, and John has a view of the *Lamb* on the Throne, and of the company that surrounded the Throne.

Chap. 5. The *book* which contains the secret Decrees of God, relative to future events, is put into the hands of Christ to be opened, which none else but he is able to do, and the Hosts of Heaven adore him.

III. *General view of this long series of Prophecies, from chap. vi. to the end.* The book of Revelation contains the prophetic history of the Church of Christ from the days of St. John to the end of time. All the duration of her suffering state is divided into *three grand successive periods*, under The seven Seals, The seven Trumpets, and The seven Vials.—The seventh Seal comprehends all the seven Trumpets; and the seventh Trumpet comprehends all the seven Vials.—These three successive periods are thus divided.

1. The first period, which contains the state of the *Roman Empire*, and the trials of the Church of Christ under that power, from the days of John to the beginning of the seventh century, is described under the first six Seals, and the first four Trumpets of the seventh Seal.

2. The second period is the whole duration of the *two grand Apostasies*, Popery in the West, and Mohammedism in the East, which commence in the same year, A. D. 606, and last exactly the same time, 1260 years, and shall fall together in the year 1866, according to the best interpreters of prophecy. The whole duration of this period is during the three last Trumpets, called the Woe Trumpets. The first Woe Trumpet is from the commencement of Popery to its zenith, A.D. 1281; and the second Woe Trumpet from the zenith of Popery to the rise of Antichrist, 1792.

3. The third period, is during the reign of *Antichrist*, or the Infidel power, who denies both the Father and the Son. This power makes his appearance towards the close of the duration of the two grand Apostasies, Popery and Mohammedism, and is closely leagued with Popery. These three powers live together, and shall fall together, at the great battle of Armageddon, in the land of Canaan. This Antichrist, the Infidel Power, makes his appearance at the commencement of the

French Revolution in the year 1792. The whole reign of Antichrist is under the third or last Woe Trumpet - and under this Trumpet, the seven Vials are poured out. And when the last Vial shall be poured out at the great Battle of Armageddon, Popery, Mohammedism, and Antichrist shall fall together, to rise no more for ever ; and then follows the restoration of the Jews, the Millennium, and the glory to come.—Let us consider these three periods in order.

THE FIRST PERIOD ;

Or the state of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the two great Apostasies, under the six first Seals, and the four first Trumpets. Rev. vi. vii. viii.

The seven Seals. Chap. vi.

1st Seal. *The White Horse.*—The victories of Christ, and spread of the Gospel in the first century.

2d Seal. *The Red Horse.*—Terrible wars and massacres from A.D. 100 to 138, when more than half a Million of Jews, and as many Gentiles, were slain.

3d Seal. *The Black Horse.*—Scarcity and deadness of provisions, which occurred between A.D. 138 and 193, over the whole Roman Empire.

4th Seal. *The Pale Horse.*—Immense numbers dying by war, famine, and pestilence, from A.D. 193 to 270.

5th Seal. *The Souls under the Altar.*—The tremendous persecution and martyrdom of the Saints, from A.D. 270 to 304; particularly under Dioclesian.

6th Seal. *The great Earthquake.*—Extraordinary convulsions in the Roman Empire, and revolution in the church in the time of Constantine, when the

great men, the enemies of Christ, were thrown into dreadful consternation. The famous edict of Constantine in favour of Christianity, was made, A.D. 313.

In Chap. vii. *a solemn pause* is made.—The great Angel of the covenant comes forward and commands the four destroying angels not to execute their commission, in blowing each one his trumpet, till all the servants of God are sealed with the Holy Ghost for their protection during the judgments to come. An exact account is kept of those that are sealed, and then a view is given of the innumerable multitudes that died in the faith during the first three centuries, as standing before the throne of the Lamb, all arrayed in white robes, and palms of victory in their hands, and all ascribing salvation to the Lamb that was slain.

The four first Trumpets. Chap. viii.

These are under the *seventh Seal*, and belong to the first period as well as the first six Seals, and show the state of the Roman Empire until the commencement of the two grand Apostasies.—After Constantine, the Empire was tranquil, and the church had rest for a short space. Christ in his priestly character offers up the prayers of the Saints, and casts fire from the Altar on the earth, as a token of his displeasure against the enemies of his gospel. The four Angels prepare to blow their Trumpets, to bring four sore judgments on the Western Empire to subdue it, and make way for the Man of sin, (the two-fold Apostasy) to arise. Chap. viii. 1—6.

1st Trumpet. *A storm of Hail.*—The Goths from the North under Allanic and Attila, destroyed a third part of the Roman Empire, from A.D. 395 to 453.

2d Trumpet. *The burning Mountain.*—Genseric, king of the Vandals, sailed from Africa with his numberless swarms, and hurled the Western Empire to destruction. A.D. 455.

3d Trumpet. *The great star Wormwood.*—Odoacer,

king of the Heruli, destroyed the line of the Western Cesars in the death of Augustulus in the year 476.

4th Trumpet. *The third part of the sun, moon, and stars darkened*—The political Luminaries of the Roman Empire fall. The Cesars, Princes, and People are under an eclipse, soon after the three first trumpets sounded.

THE SECOND PERIOD;

Or the whole duration of the *Two great Apostasies*, Mohammedism in the East, and Popery in the West, under the three Woe Trumpets.

The first of these describes the two-fold Apostasy in its rise; the second, in the zenith of its power, till the rise of Antichrist; and the third describes more particularly the horrors of Antichrist, and the downfall of these three powers together. The two branches of the great Apostasy run parallel to each other; but to avoid confusion, the history of each is given separately. The whole duration of this second period is described in Rev. ix–xiv. The *first woe* Trumpet begins to sound A. D. 606, when the two-fold Apostasy commences. The *second*, A. D. 1281, when the four Sultanies subdue the Eastern Empire. The *third*, A. D. 1792, when Antichrist appears.

First. The Eastern Branch, or Mohammedism. Rev. ix.

1st Woe Trumpet, as it regards *Mohammedism*. A star falls from heaven to earth—opens the bottomless pit, and lets out a vast swarm of Locusts, and their leader Apollyon at their head. Their commission is to torment only the men who had not the seal of God in their forehead. As far as appears, this star was the apostate Sergeus, who assisted Mohammed, or Apollyon, in forging his

imposture in the year 606. The Locusts were the Saracens, the disciples of Mohammed, who ravaged the earth for 150 years, from 612 to 762, and then rested and settled.

2d Woe Trumpet. The four Angels which were bound in the river Euphrates are loosed for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, and the number of their horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand. That is, the four Sultanies who had their dominion on the banks of the Euphrates were no longer restrained, but had their liberty to extend their conquests. And with their myriads of Turks they over-ran and subdued the Eastern Roman Empire, and took possession of Constantinople. The four Sultanies were let loose A. D. 1281, and continued their devastation till the year 1672. In all 391 years.

Secondly. The Western branch, or Popery.

Rev. xi—xiv.

In Rev. chap. x. the Angel of the covenant produceth the LITTLE Book, which comprehends the next four chapters. And in this little book is written the whole history of Popery, during the 1260 years, under the whole three Woe Trumpets. In point of chronology, these four chapters, Rev. xi. xii. xiii. xiv. run parallel to each other, relating severally, though with some variety of circumstances, to the same period, and the same events; so as to form jointly a complete history of Popery.

1. The prophesying of the two Witnesses. Rev. xi.

This chapter takes a view of the whole duration of Popery, under the whole of the three Woe Trumpets. By the *Temple of God* is meant, true Christians; by the *outer Court*, nominal Christians; by the *holy City*, the visible Church: and by the *Two Witnesses*, which are the same with the two olive trees and the two candle-

sticks, we are to understand the two branches of the church of Christ, that before, and that after his Incarnation : the one founded on the twelve Patriarchs, and the other on the twelve Apostles, both which testify with one mouth. This true church of Christ, founded on the Apostles and Prophets, received *political life* at the Reformation from the year 1530 to the year 1537, under the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse. The Witnesses were *slain* by the last head of the Beast, or the last form of the Roman Empire, by the instigation of the Pope, at the battle of Malburge, A. D. 1547 ; and were brought to life at their victory over the Duke of Magdeburgh, 1550. The Protestants soon after became an acknowledged Church, and so ascended into heaven.

2. *The War of the Dragon with the Woman.* Rev. xii.

This chapter like the preceding treats of the whole duration of Popery. *Heaven* is the general church, the same as the holy city in the last chapter. The *woman* is the spiritual church, the same as the temple and the two witnesses. And the *part of heaven* occupied by the Dragon is the nominal church of the Apostasy, the same as the outer court. The *woman clothed with the sun*, standing on the moon, and crowned with twelve stars, is the church founded by the twelve Apostles, which borrows her light and righteousness from Christ. The *man child*, is the word of God, of which the church travailed for six centuries. The *Dragon* is the Devil trying to destroy the gospel by encouraging Apostasy, persecution and superstitions, by which he drew the *Roman Bishops* to apostatize. The *woman flies into the wilderness*, into obscurity, during the 1260 years. Victory is obtained over the Dragon at the *Reformation* : and the chief engine of Satan is no longer the church of Rome, but Infidelity, which comes in under the third Woe Trumpet.

3. The Ten-horned beast of the Sea. Rev. xiii.

This is the same with Daniel's fourth beast, and means the *secular Roman Empire*, which was a beast in its heathen state, and five of its heads, or forms of government, had fallen before John's time. The sixth head which then existed, received his deadly wound, and ceased to be a beast in the time of Constantine, A. D. 313, when the Empire professed Christianity. His deadly wound was healed when the Emperor Phocas set up Popery, his little horn, and so became a beast again, to wear out the saints for forty-two months, or 1260 years. The seventh or last head of the beast is in the West, and the eighth head is of the seventh. When Charlemagne was Patrician of Rome, he was the seventh head; and when he became Emperor of Germany, he was the eighth head, which lasts in some form or other to the end of the 1260 years.

4. The Two-horned Beast of the Earth. Rev. xiii. 11.

The earth is the Roman Empire, and the beast that springs out of it is *Popery*. In the year 606, the tyrannical Emperor Phocas gave Pope Boniface an universal empire in spirituals. The Pope is the head of the beast; the regular and secular Clergy, as distinct ecclesiastical kingdoms, are his two horns. He speaks as Satan moves him, and employs all the power of the Empire, and causeth all to pay devotion to the principles which made the Empire a beast, such as worshipping images and persecuting the saints. The two-horned beast made an *Image* to the ten-horned beast, that is, the Pope restored persecution and idolatry, which the Empire once practised with delight. The name, not of the Popedom, but of the Empire, is *Latinus*. The mark of the beast is the cross, used for the purpose of cruelty and superstition. The harlot which rides on the beast is the Popedom supported by the Empire.

5. Of the true Church during the Apostasy. Rev. xiv.

The 144,000, are the same with the two Witnesses, the line of faithful believers descending from the Apostles, and prior to the Reformation. In the world they had tribulation, but they had joy in God, and their character is here described. The first three Angels may be the Lutheran, the Calvinistic, and the English churches, at the time of the reformation. The last three Angels refer to things under the last Woe Trumpet, when the Vials are poured out.

Thus we have seen that the four chapters of the little book run parallel to each other, and take different views of the same subject during the 1260 years.

Chap. 11. The church in distress and obscurity.

12. Her conflicts with Satan, and victory over him.

13. Her sufferings from the Roman Empire and from Popery.

14. The joy and triumph of the church in her God.

Preparations for the Third Period. Rev. xv.

In this chapter, the seven Angels receive their commission, and are preparing to pour out the seven Vials of destruction on the great enemies of God and the gospel. In beholding this, the true followers of the Lamb, who had steered clear of Popery, are represented as standing on a sea of glass, firm and tranquil, though living in tempestuous times, and singing the song of Moses, because their enemies are soon to fall. At the close of the second Woe Trumpet in the year 1789, there was a great earthquake, and France, the third part of the city, fell.

THE THIRD PERIOD;

Or the Reign of Antichrist.

This in reality is the latter part of the second period, and is considered as a distinct period, because a new grand enemy of God now makes his appearance on the earth; the *great Antichrist*, who denieth both the Father and the Son. This is the same with Daniel's Infidel king, or atheistical power, which made his appearance at the French revolution in the year 1792.—The third period begins and terminates with the third woe trumpet, which begins to sound August 12, A. D. 1792. Under this trumpet the seven vials of the wrath of God are poured out on the great enemies of his church; and these vials are the same with the seven thunders, and the last plagues.—This period, or the duration of the last trumpet, is divided into three parts—The harvest, the intermediate space, and the vintage. The first three vials belong to the harvest; the next three vials, to the intermediate space, and the last vial, which lasts much longer, and is far more tremendous than all the rest, belongs to the vintage. One vial is not finished before another begins to be poured out.

I. The Harvest. Rev. xvi.

This harvest of God's wrath commenced with the French Revolution, and the first vial began immediately to be poured out on the Latin earth, on the subjects of the Pope, and of the Infidel king. During this harvest, the first three vials are pouring out their dreadful contents, by which we are to understand the miseries inflicted upon mankind by the tyranny of Antichrist; the horrors, wars, massacres, and devastations which now fill Europe. As these events are not completely fulfilled, we cannot speak particularly respecting each vial. It is however on the whole probable, that we are now under the third and last vial of the harvest, though the two first may still be running.

2. The Intermediate Space.

This is the time between the harvest and the vintage, during which three more of the vials will be poured out, not on Protestant nations, but upon those that have the mark of the beast, and who have shed the blood of the saints; and upon those who have blasphemed the name of God: that is, upon Papists, blaspheming Atheists, and Mohammedans. It is conjectured by some, that the first of the three intermediate vials will destroy the French Empire; the second, the Roman Empire; and the third, the Turkish Empire, to prepare the way for pouring out the last vial of all during the time of the vintage, when all the great enemies of God shall fall together.

3. The Vintage.

The vintage and the last vial are of the same duration: and this vial of consummation which lasts for a long while, is of all others by far the most tremendous. Three very important events take place under it, namely, The great earthquake; The fall of Babylon; and the battle of Armageddon.

1. The *great earthquake*, or a great revolution which will divide the Latin Roman Earth into three great Empires, which probably will be Russia, Germany, and France.

2. The *fall of spiritual Babylon*, or the entire subversion of the Papacy, which is here called the false prophet, and the harlot, and is the same with the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast. This is not to take place till the end of the 1260 years.

3. The *great battle of Armageddon*. At the close of the 1260 years, the Roman beast under his last head, the false prophet, and the Infidel power, will be leagued together to make war against the word of God. These three powers will gather their myriads together, and will go forth resolved to exterminate Christianity from

the face of the earth. They will march their numberless hosts to the Holy Land against the Jews, then beginning to return, and aided by Protestant nations. But God in some way or other will come in that day against his enemies, to take vengeance upon them, "And there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." At Megiddo in the Holy Land, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, these three grand enemies of God and truth, with their myriads, shall fall together, to rise no more for ever. Then shall the remainder of the Jews be gathered from all countries into their own land. After this follows the happy millennium; and the whole church shall finally be gathered into everlasting glory.

EXPLANATIONS.

REV. XVII. XVIII. XIX.

These three chapters are not a continuation of the history, neither do they introduce any new subject; but they give a more detailed account of some branches of the preceding history; and more particulary of the events that shall take place under the vial of the vintage.

Chap. xvii. This chapter gives us an enlarged account of the *church of Rome*, the spiritual harlot, the mystic Babylon; of her union with the Roman empire; of her flourishing state while the ten kings gave their power to the Empire, and made war with the Lamb: of her declining state when some of the ten kings should hate her and strip her naked: and of her being at the last burned with fire.

Chap. xviii. This chapter contains an account of the *final overthrow of the church of Rome*, or spiritual Babylon, and shows how all the kings, priests, and people that have traded with her, and refused to come

out of her, shall, at the time of her final destruction, be filled with astonishment, horror, and consternation.

Chap. xix. We have here the exceeding great joy and triumph of all true believers towards the close of the 1260 years. They greatly rejoice to see the kingdom of Satan fall. They praise God aloud for the glorious progress of the gospel, called here the marriage of the Lamb. They fill heaven and earth with their halleujahs for the complete and final victories of Christ over all antichristian and apostate powers, at the great battle of Armageddon.

The Millennium and the glory to come.

Rev. xx. xxi. xxii.

Chap. xx. *The Millennium.*—At the commencement of this period, Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and not suffered to tempt and delude the nations. The pure religion of Jesus shall overspread the whole earth with extraordinary power, till all nations shall be filled with holiness, possess the spirit of ancient martyrs, and resemble the inhabitants of heaven: yet none will be perfect till they pass through death to glory. When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed for a short time: and when the Christians of the Millennium shall have died away, a new race of enemies to Christ shall arise after them, who, through the instigation of Satan, shall assemble together from the four quarters of the globe, a host innumerable, and shall make war against the remnant of true believers, but shall not prevail. No, they shall fall by millions, under the heavy wrath of God, for their enmity against his beloved Son and the children of his grace. This will be the last attempt to extirpate Christianity from the earth. Soon after this contest the day of judgment will appear. The last two chapters of the book of Revelation describe the heavenly state and the glory which shall endure for ever.

A Table of the 1260 years' Apostasy.

CHAP.

9. } History of the Eastern Apostasy under the two first Woe
 } Trumpets.

10. Introduction to the Little Book.

11. { Cotemporary history of the Western Apostasy

12. { under the two first Woe Trumpets, and to } The Little
13. { the end of the third, though a new period is } Book.
14. { introduced.

15. Introduction to the pouring out of the Vials.

16. The Third Woe Trumpet,

{ Vial 1.
Vial 2.
Vial 3.
Vial 4.
Vial 5.
Vial 6.
Vial 7. The Vintage.

The Harvest.
Intermediate Vials.

17. } A detailed account of Events that will take place under
18. } the seventh Vial, which lasts much longer than the
19. } rest.

THE END

**L. B. SEELEY AND SONS, WESTON GREEN,
THAMES DITTON.**

